

The Natural Angle

A PUBLICATION OF PRACTICAL IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR FARRIERS

Volume 1: Issue 3

Fitting Barshoes

FURTHER EXAMINATION OF BARSHOE APPLICATION

BY EDDIE WATSON

Barshoes should not be nailed on without good reason. Before **B** you begin, be sure you understand why you're putting a barshoe on. This will help you with the decision as to what kind of bar, how much extension and other details of the fit. If the pasterns show weakness you may decide on an eggbar. It may be a straight bar for pro-

tection as in the case of a more upright hoof with navicular problems. The important thing is to justify your decisions, it will help you do a better job. Barshoes are often perceived as being difficult to fit. I think there are a few basic concepts which help simplify the job. My starting point in fitting barshoes is to shape the shoe to fit the foot the same as I would if it were an open shoe. The variable is simply

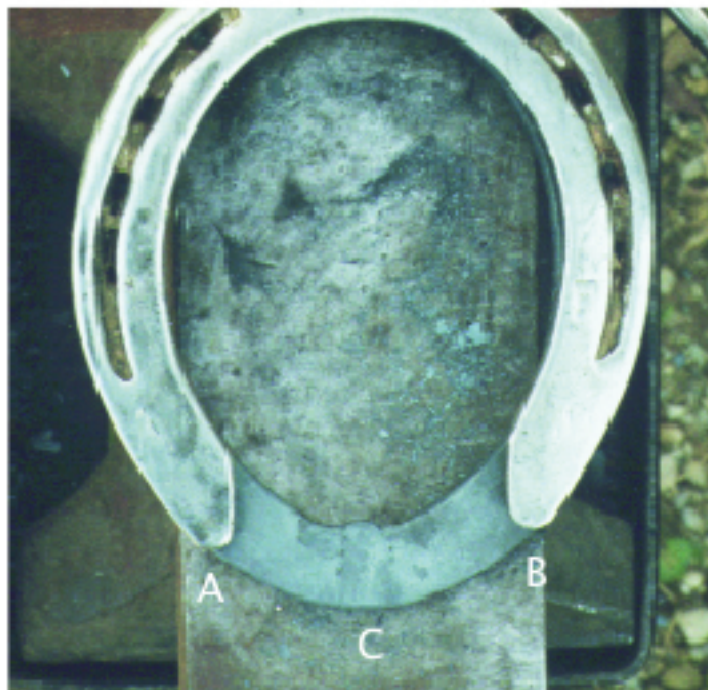
the length of the bar (how much support I feel is necessary). Think of the two heels of an open shoe as point A and point B. When I determine how much support I want to give, point C would be the end point of the bar. It is then a matter of connecting these points with a radius or even simpler, the straight bar. The question remaining is how to decide the amount of support. You need to con-

sider the variables such as the intended use of the horse, conformation, pastern angle and possible lameness problems. Your attention and experience in evaluating the variables is going to be a key to your success in applying barshoes. I have some general principles I use.

A. Let the angle of the hoof and pastern help you decide on the length. You should be working to bring the two angles into alignment.

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Below left: Determine extension, connect to points A&B. **Below right:** This foot appears to be shod very well. The heel extension is correct. I might rocker the toe.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- B. The more upright the hoof the less bar you need. The more underrun the heels the farther you need to extend the bar.
- C. Use a straight bar for protection, an eggbar for support.
- D. Whenever possible rocker the toe of the shoe and set it back from the toe to enhance the breakover.
- E. On performance horses I never extend the bars beyond the bulbs.

Keep in mind what the horse will be doing. If it is a turnout, you have to be very cautious with the length of the bar. A horse in training kept in a controlled environment can usually handle more extension of the bar. Pay attention to the details and your fit will be much better. ■

Eddie Watson is a farrier from Keswick, Virginia. He has been working with horses since the 40's, taking his first "pay" as a shoer in 1948. He has been shoeing for some clients for no less than 20 years, many the second generation. His primary work has been hunters and jumpers, sales yearlings and breeding stock in the Keswick area.



Above left and right: Front foot with eggbar. Shoe is set back nicely from toe and fit at the quarters is good. Shoe is short, line indicates where I would like to see the bar end. **Right:** I would shoe this foot with rocker toe eggbars that are not extended quite as far as photo below left. **Below left:** For this foot I would recommend a rocker toe, egg/heartbar combination extended to the mark on the picture.



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The Tool Corner

BY ROY BLOOM

In Volume 1, Issue 1 we discussed the use of the forepunch. In this issue we'll continue with the use of the drift and pritchel, completing the steps of the shoe punching process. We'll use the 5 City nail and 5/16x3/4" barstock again for the discussion. Figure 1 depicts the 5 City nail. To review,

area A is the portion of the nail that will be projecting above the ground surface of the shoe. The forepunch displaces material for area B of the nail. Area B on a 5 City nail is 3/16" long. After forepunching to this depth you have 1/8" of material remaining to be punched through on a 5/16" thick shoe.

The Drift

1/8" is a lot of material for a

pritchel to remove efficiently. In order to get the most life out of your pritchel you should move 1/16" of the remaining material with a drift. The drift is used to displace enough material for the area marked C in figure 1. This 1/16" doesn't seem like much but the relief that this gives is just enough to make pritcheling easier and more efficient. The drift has two important areas, the shank and the tip. The tip should be the exact size of the nail shank (area C, figure 1) and should be flat, not pyramid shaped like the forepunch. The dimension of the drift's shank must be smaller than the forepunch to allow the drifting without making contact with the forepunch area. On smaller nails and on

City nails this dimension is quite small, making this tool vulnerable to abuse and breakage. You should be very careful in the use and maintenance of the drift to get the proper results and reasonable lifespan for the tool.

The drift should only take one or two quick, light blows to move the 1/16" of material. Do not bottom out or drive the drift into the anvil. To avoid excessive heat buildup in the tool do not stay in the hole any longer than absolutely necessary. You now have the shoe set up for pritcheling, the final step.

The Pritchel

The pritchel's sole purpose is to slug out a rectangular hole the exact size of the shank of the desired nail. The measurement of the shank area just below the head is the dimension the

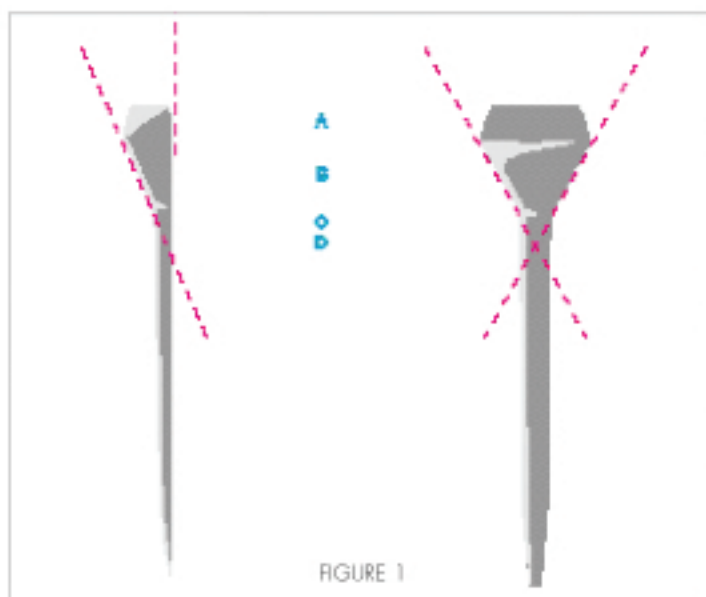


FIGURE 1

Below left: Drift. Below right: City Forepunch.



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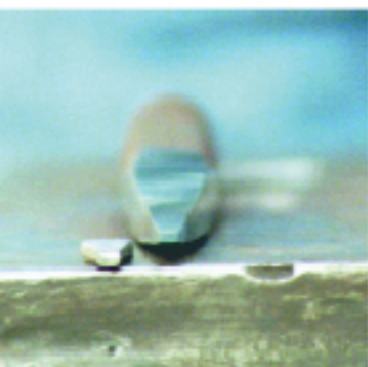
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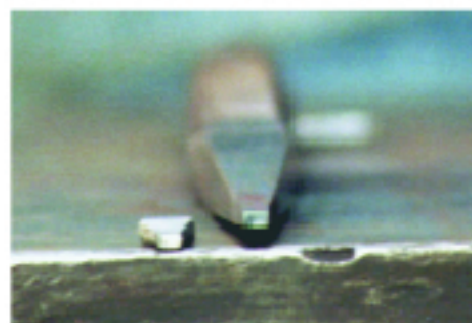
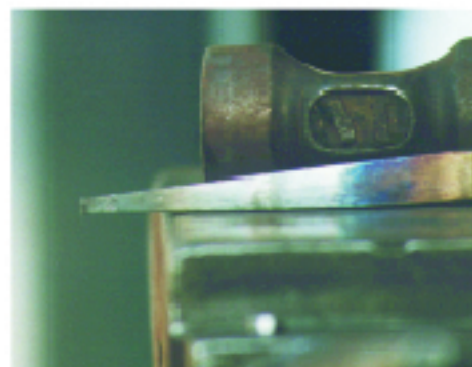
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Above: Step 1 - tip of pritchel smaller than nail. **Above center and right:** Upset the tip. **Right:** Produce small flats. **Far right and bottom:** End should now be the same as nail, with slight recess.



pritchel should be set for. In order to properly and precisely punch to the desired dimension you need to understand a few techniques.

1. The pritchel should work like a mini punch press. It must shear the slug from the stock. In order to do this efficiently the stock must be relatively cold. This would be a black heat approximately 400-500 degrees. The blow must be sharp and straight. If the heat is higher (if you detect a red coloration in the steel) the material is too elastic and will not allow a clean shear. Instead it will drag material down with the tip leaving a burr on the backside. Numerous blows to the pritchel will also cause the same result. You need to make a single sharp straight blow to get maximum shearing effect.

2. The tip of the pritchel should be prepped to achieve the best results. All pritchels come with a straight taper. As the



pritchel is driven in the material, the taper forces the hole to expand. The farther you go in the bigger the hole becomes. The tip of the pritchel should be backed up to produce a tip the exact size of the desired nail, leaving a slight recess behind it. By setting your pritchel in this manner, the tip will shear out the slug and the pritchel will end up in the recessed area. The pritchel will not enlarge the hole and will now also be loose in the hole.

Backing it up.
Heat the tip of your

pritchel and then draw the end out until it is smaller at the tip than the dimension of the nail you will be using. Place it back in the fire and take a short heat at the tip only. Do not heat it too much, a dull red is fine. Now start tapping (upsetting) the tip with the flat of your hammer. Continue to take short heats and work the tip until a small amount of the material is upset. Keep the pritchel tip going straight, don't let it get crooked or bent. Take another short heat, set the upset area on the anvil edge and tap down on it,

producing small flats. Check the size now with the nail shank. Another tap or two on the end should finish it for you. It should match the nail shank exactly. Set it aside and let it air cool. With practice and attention to the details of the nail shank and pritchel you will learn how much to back up and how much to flatten to get the desired result. Setting and using your pritchel in this manner (along with using a good drift) will allow you to use your pritchel for more shoes with less need for adjustment. ■

New Products

BLOOM FORGE AND KERCKHAERT INTRODUCE NEW PRODUCTS

KERCKHAERT SX-7 SIZE 2 - Kerckhaert is now producing a size two unclipped SX-7. It is available in front and hind patterns.

Bloom Forge has recently introduced a hoof tester. The total length of the tool is 14" and it opens to approximately 5". Bloom is also offering a heavy pritchel made from 3/4" S-7 stock instead of the 5/8" of the normal pritchel. This is a tool well suited to gaited shoes and draft shoes. ■



Tips On Recordkeeping

With all of the advantages of being self-employed, one area that can cause you problems (or at the very least, give you a headache) is the issue of taxes. When self employed, you suddenly find that you are responsible for your own income tax and self employment tax. And it becomes further complicated if you hire employees, for whom you must withhold and pay payroll taxes, including Social Security, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation.

FINDING A GOOD TAX ADVISOR CAN SAVE YOU MONEY IN THE LONG RUN.

Many self employed people find themselves in trouble because they simply did not understand the rules. It may be hard to find the time to keep abreast of tax changes and if you have a very busy practice, finding a good tax advisor can save you money in the long run. There are, however, steps that you can take

that will make your life easier (and keep the tax man away). Good recordkeeping is essential. Following these tips will help you file your income tax return with minimum effort and will be essential if you should be faced with an audit.

1. Keeping a daily log where you document travel, meals and entertainment de-

ductions can be helpful at the end of the year.

2. Notes about automobile usage should include before and after mileage, tolls and purpose of each trip.

3. Notes related to business meals and entertainment (especially these days- as the deduction comes under more scrutiny) should include whom you entertained and the specific business purpose.

4. Make notes in your tax file concerning your return and how you arrived at the numbers.

Note: The IRS has six years to challenge a return, so be sure to check with your tax advisor on how long to keep tax related documents. ■

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