



### Saddles slipping to right on Emma.

The front view of Emma shows that the left side (green arrow) of the rib cage is farther away from her centre line than the right side (red arrow). The view from behind shows that the area of the back just behind the shoulders falls away at a steeper angle on the right side.

The FnE saddle has been adjusted to compensate for this difference. However when riding in the school, which includes riding round corners, the saddle always slipped to the right on a left corner and was then corrected by changing rein and taking a right corner.

On riding through a left corner the forces on the horse and rider are to the right. If a symmetrical horse bends to the left in turning the corner the right side of the rib cage will bend out on the right and in on the left. This normal movement of the rib cage supports the saddle and rider against the rightward forces acting in the left turn. In Emma's case this does not happen.

The asymmetrical rib conformation will make it more difficult for her to bend to the left so the right side does not move out to support the rider. In addition the slope of the rib cage to the right exacerbates the problem. This can be clearly felt when riding Emma in that the right leg moves away from the rider in the left bend, whereas both feet feel firm in the stirrups on the right bend where the leftward forces are counteracted by the right rib cage supporting the rider.

A rider knowing this can counteract the effect by applying a stronger downward force, with an inward closing pressure in the left leg when taking a left bend. This however is the rider's weaker leg due to a rheumatic hip



### Helping Emma and rider

Using tight figures of eight at the walk can be very helpful. The tight bend is obtained by using the inside leg to apply downward and inward force on the girth while the outside leg is behind the girth pressing with inward pressure only (this is bending the horse around the inside leg). The inside rein is used lightly to encourage bend in the neck following the bend in the horse's body, while the outside rein is lifted up and forward with no pressure on the bit (there is no attempt at collection and the rein is not used to generate the bend). With Emma the figure of eight would start with a right circle followed by two of the left circle then 1 right, 3 left, 1 right 4 left. If this is done well the rider is likely to feel sore in the adductor longus muscle of the inner thigh the following day, so develop the exercise slowly so that leg strength is not lost but rather built up over time. Emma did not show any objection to this exercise even when a very tight left bend was asked. So she can do it, it's a matter of making it more natural for both horse and rider.