

Horse & Rider

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The most amazing all-round sports horses

THE Akhal Tekes horse comes from Turkmenistan in central Asia and is thought to be one of the oldest breeds with only 3,500 horses in the world.

The Akhal Tekes is noted for its speed, endurance and ability to survive in severe climatic conditions, and is sought after as an all-round sports horse.

Travel writer and stud yard owner, Gill Suttle from Ross-on-Wye, is one of five people breeding the horses outside their native country.

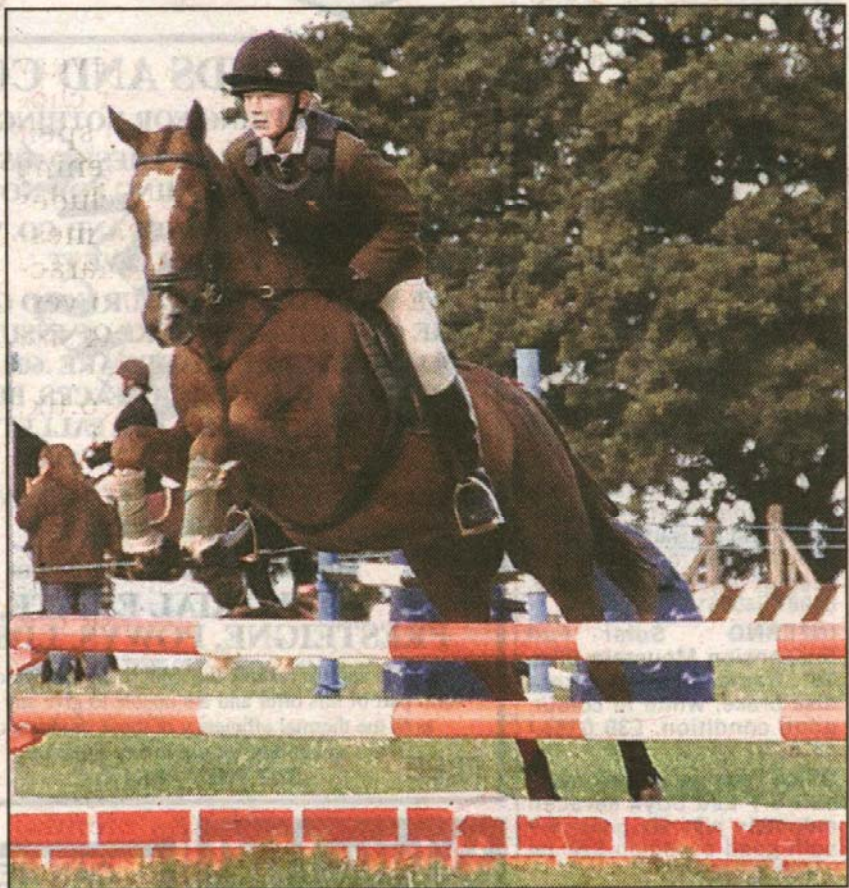
Gill was first introduced to the breed in 1996 when she travelled to Turkmenistan to write about the country.

The only way she could get to the out of the way places she needed to visit was on horseback.

For three months, she rode a stallion, Atamekan, during which time she built up such a bond with the horse that she bought him and brought him back to England.

"These horses are revered as national emblems in their own country but the ones that don't make breeding grade are just left to starve and die.

"I knew that once I returned to England, this



▲ Roz Shepherd jumping one of Gill Suttle's Akhal Tekes horses at Harewood End.

would be Atamekan's fate too and he was worth more than that.

"All the time I had him in Turkmenistan he never let me down. He was a truly special horse," she said.

Gill managed to buy a mare and bred pure breeds and part breeds from Atamekan totalling 14 foals.

"These horses seem to

defy regular conformation and they hold their heads high.

"This frees the shoulder and they curl their backs like greyhounds and make the most amazing all-round sports horses. They are second to the English thoroughbred in racing," she said. For further details, call Gill on 01600 890730.