



WYE VALLEY RIDING CLUB

Established 1974. BHS Affiliated

Website: www.wyevalleyrc.co.uk

Volume 7 Issue 1

COMMITTEE FOR 2016/2017

Winter 2016

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Hi All, welcome to your winter newsletter. As you can see from the change of officers on the left we have to say goodbye to Karen Chase and Helen Brown who have resigned due to business and family commitments. We wish them all the best for the future and thank them for their commitment and help over the years. You will be missed.

Our new Chef d'Equips are Julian Holmes for Dressage, Show Jumping and Combined training and Laura Jones-Griffiths for Horse Trials.

We are now looking for some young blood to join our committee and help us promote Wye Valley Riding Club. We are a happy bunch of horsey enthusiasts so if you would like to help please contact our Chairperson, Kathy Trigg, or any of the committee, you'll have great fun. We hold committee meetings at a local hostelry and usually have a drink and if you want, have something to eat.

Blimey, it's only 8 sleeps until Christmas day I hope you are all up to date with the shopping and haven't forgotten to order the turkey etc. The weather looks as if it's going to be mild, hope it doesn't mean rain I doubt very much if we will get any snow, hay ho!!!!

Anyway may I, and the committee wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year and if you feel like a trip out on the 27th why not come to the Welsh National race meeting at Chepstow Racecourse, it will be fantastic.



TRAINING



Wye Valley Riding Club

Training dates

Open to non-members
VENUE - USK COLLEGE
NP15 1XJ

25th February 2017 10am (indoors)

Flatwork

Instructor – Carole Broad

5th March 2017 10am (indoors)

Jumping

Instructor – Katie Williams

All sessions will be groups of no more than 4 riders and are open to riders (and horses) of all abilities.

£20 WVRC members

£25 non members

Contact: Laura Jones-Griffiths

ljonesgriffiths@gmail.com

07557 646191

01633 400072

Flat work training with Lizzel Winters at Severnvale

We are pleased to have new training dates available, in groups of 4 riders. The lessons are 2pm, for one hour, and the cost is £22.50. To book or for more information, please contact Lindsey Gaunt on Lindsey.gaunt@googlemail.com or 01291 680065

[Tuesday 20th of December 2017](#)

[Friday, January 6 2017](#)

[Friday, January 13, 2017](#)

[Friday, February 10 2017](#)

[Friday March 3rd 2017](#)

[Friday, April 7 2017](#)

[Friday, May 12 2017](#)

MONTHLY MEETINGS

There is no monthly meeting in January.

February

Join us on Wednesday 8 February at the Anchor Inn, Tintern. World renowned Veterinary Surgeon Rod Fisher BVSc MRCVS, vet to Team GB Paralympic Dressage Team will be sharing his experiences of Rio in this illustrated talk. This highly dedicated and successful team returned with a haul of medals to include Team Gold, Six Individual Gold and Four Silver. We will hear how these horses are prepared for the Paralympics, their time in Rio and their safe travelling.

March

On Wednesday 8 March Osteopath Hannah Sheehan will give a talk and answer members questions. Further details will follow.

If you have suggestions for future meetings, please let us know.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Fees of £22.50

Membership fees were due on the 1st October, so for those who have not yet paid please either BACS the money to the club's account, details as follows: Account name Wye Valley Riding Club. Account No: 43520782. Sort Code: 522126 or send a cheque to Marilyn Kirton at 14 Orchard Avenue, Bulwark, Chepstow, Mon. NP16 5RD.

If you haven't renewed your membership by the 31st January 2017 I shall assume that you no longer wish to be a member and your name will be removed from our records.

Winter Intermediate Dressage

Next we are looking for members who would like to try their hand at making up a team for the Winter Intermediate Dressage Qualifier on 29th January 2017 at King's E.C. Bromyard. These qualifiers are great fun and you will meet members of other clubs. The atmosphere is very friendly. If you are interested then contact Julian Holmes on 07873 346852 or e.mail julian.holmes4@virgin.net



SHOW JUMPING AND DRESSAGE SHOWS 2017

The dates below are for our 2017 shows at Howick Farm by kind permission of Colin Jenkins and Family, and will be evening events. They will be for members and NON members. They are great fun and run to suit all types of rider and horse be it inexperienced to the more experienced. Entry forms and costs will be sent out nearer the time.

Wednesday 24th May: Dressage

Wednesday 21st June: Show Jumping

Wednesday 5th July: Dressage

Super Saturday 16th September: Show Jumping All Day.

Possible Dressage Show at Usk College in April

REPORTS

NOVEMBER 2nd AGM

This was our Annual General Meeting held at the Anchor Hotel Tintern, the attendance was good and there was a lot of discussion. The Anchor put on a buffet for us which went down a treat. Sadly we lost two committee members, Karen Chase and Helen Brown due to business and family commitments and thanks were given to them for their hard workover the years.

For the full details of the meeting I have attached a copy of the minutes.

DECEMBER 7th CHRISTMAS PARTY

This was held at the Anchor in Tintern and was very enjoyable the food was great and so was the company. There were 29 of us, which was a big improvement on last year. We were pleased that our very good friends and landowners Colin and Margaret Jenkins were able to come as our guests. Diana foxed some of us with her horsey quiz. We also held a raffle, and thank you to all those who brought prizes and bought tickets, we raised £63 to go towards the stabling for our Novice Show Jumping Team who qualified for the Championships at Keysoe.

REPORT ON NOVICE SHOW JUMPING QUALIFIER (Reporter: Bronwen Daniel)

“Where next?! Bedfordshire?!“ This was the moment of mild panic when we discovered that we had won the Area 15 Novice Indoor Team Show Jumping qualifier.

What an introduction to competing with the Wye Valley Riding Club. When I was encouraged to join the novice SJ team I took the welcoming wording on the clubs home page to heart, “*Competitions at all levels, fairly competent, fairly incompetent and the downright terrified*”. With the latter being the most fitting, I decided that as long as I held on and tried to remember the course I’d be doing my bit. Well, I managed to hold on and just about remember the course.

Having actively avoided competition as a child, this was my first experience participating in anything more official than the village show. I found myself manically checking through the rules the night before - is it possible that my horses bit is illegal? I’ve always been a law abiding citizen!

Fortunately, soon after arriving at the competition I bumped into other riding club members who had come to support, what a lovely surprise. Julien, our ever gallant chef d'Equipe calmly breezed us through the tack and passport check. Into the collecting ring and Peter Buist became team coach helping us over the warm up jumps, confidently setting us up for the course ahead.

I managed to catch a glimpse of the clear rounds by Julian and Debbie, before Coco (a.k.a. Snips Surprise) and I were whisked into the arena for our first round. It went in such a blur that the only thing I remember is the lovely reassuring smile from Pam in the judges box just before we set off. Barely time for a sandwich and we were all off again for a second round. Not quite as seamless as the first, with a couple of us leaving spectators hearts in their mouths at one particular turn-my apologies for that!

Coco and I were heading back to the box (while congratulating ourselves at having survived the experience); to cross paths with the other team members' running back to get their horses. "We're in the jump off!" Back to the arena for a head to head with Southerndown Riding Club.

Julian on Tewdric, and Laura on Kilbeg Banner managed to keep us in the game with just four faults a piece. Debbie showed us all how to do it flying around clear on Ballymalis Mist. Coco and I were the very last to go which enabled the team to calculate how many faults were between the two teams. "You can knock one jump down" (which we duly did). A few minutes later Peter came out with a big smile on his face, "You've won"!

A big thank you to the hosts Southerndown Riding Club, who kept up their good humour and words of encouragement despite the cold. Thanks also go to Julian for looking after us all, the Wye Valley members who travelled down to support us, and of course to Coco, who has come a long way from that surprise foal born at Chepstow Racecourse. I would thoroughly recommend anyone to consider joining one of the Wye Valley Riding club teams. The support and encouragement from the club and team members is really special indeed.

Now for some hard work over the winter in preparation for the final. We will certainly be making the most of the training sessions that Laura has organised. It turns out that we will be travelling to the other side of the country (well, quite far) on April fools day no less...

An Adventure in Iceland

During October half term I was lucky enough to go away for the week on holiday to Iceland. The trip came about through another riding club member who has a friend she met through work from a town near Reykjavik. Staying with a local family we basically got a week long personal tour of the country, but the best part was the fact that our hosts owned Icelandic horses so we got to go riding every day.

We arrived on Tuesday and our first port of call had to be the Blue Lagoon. The Blue Lagoon geothermal spa is one of the most visited attractions in Iceland. The spa is located in a lava field in Grindavík on the Reykjanes Peninsula, south-western Iceland. The waters are blue as a result of the minerals dissolved in them and the temperature fluctuates between 37-40 degrees. There are various facemasks to smear yourself with, a sauna and a bar you can swim up to. It felt truly decadent floating in hot water with an algae mask on my face and a beer in my hand - Classy!

Having de-algaed and dressed we went to meet our hosts and were immediately whisked off to see some of the sights. Lava fields, geysers, waterfalls, snow, steam, ash and rocks were in abundance! The landscape is breath-taking and surrounded by snow topped mountains in the far distance which add amazing perspective when you can actually see them through the clouds and rain!



Some of the spectacular sights along the way

An Adventure in Iceland cont:



The highlight of the trip had to be the opportunities we got to ride the native horses. Icelandic horses are very hardy little things with thick coats, stocky legs and wonderful temperaments. I made the mistake of referring to them as ponies and got told rather abruptly that they were horses! (They were ponies according to their height but their hearts and character certainly made them seem bigger)



In Iceland horses are kept in what appear to be horse villages. On the outskirts of the towns are extensive areas dedicated to horses and riding. The stables are all American barn style with the boxes looking tiny to my eyes and was not uncommon to have two horses in each box. My host explained to me that during the summer months the horses are turned out to graze and given the warmer months off. Then in the winter they are brought back in to the stables where they are kept in for the winter so they can be fed and kept out of the elements. The thick coats are great protection from the dry cold but the horses hate to be wet as much as our horses do.

Lotus – my main concern was whether he'd see his way through his splendid forelock!

Riding is quite a different experience from what I am used to. To start with getting on is a lot easier with the average horse being about 14hh. They are ridden in special saddle much more like dressage saddles with short girths and designed to be ridden in with long stirrups. They also sit the saddles further back on the ponies back than we would with emphasis on keeping the shoulder clear. Bridles are simple snaffle bits with commonly dropped nose bands. I didn't see a single martingale the whole time I was there.

Tolting around the heated indoor school!



An Adventure in Iceland cont:

Outside the stable areas there are networks of tracks created through the lava fields specifically for riding on. They are packed stone similar to the main paths in our forests and consist of routes from a few kilometres to an entire days ride. They even link up to tracks from other horse areas should you want to travel long distances.

Icelandic horses have 5 paces: walk, trot, tolt, canter and pace. Tolt is a curious 4 beat pace which looks like they are trotting with their front legs and walking behind! You do not rise, just sit but it is pretty comfortable and definitely less bouncy than trot. Pace is 2 beat with legs moving in pairs on the same side (the same as pacers!)

The first horse I rode, and my favourite gave me my first taste of tolt. At first it was hard to aim for as I didn't know what it felt like but with a bit of preparation Lotus and I were off. Whhhhheeeeeeeeeee! It was so much fun, really fast and sort of just rolls you about in the saddle. I had been warned that Lotus was pretty strong and indeed he was but I didn't really want to stop anyway!

During our rides I quizzed our host and found out that Icelandic horses are the only breed of horse in Iceland. Other horses are not permitted to enter the country owing to the fact that Iceland is free of many of the diseases we encounter in the UK and around the world, as a result of this a horse once exported from Iceland is not allowed back.

The horses are clearly treasured in Iceland and rightly so as I found myself to be quite taken with them and the rest of the country. A truly magical (if a little chilly) experience!

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Once again have a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year from all the committee.



Merry Christmas