**Witheridge Riding Club**

**Newsletter**

**December 2014**

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**Committee**

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**Team Coordinators**

Novice Indoor SJ Tamsin O’Connor [tamsinandsteve@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tamsinandsteve@hotmail.co.uk) 01884 242972

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**Hello Everyone**

I think we can safely say that the lovely autumn is finally over, with some very cold nights recently! But this does give us some lovely sunny days for getting out and enjoying the countryside on our horses. We are working hard at the moment planning next year’s events, both social and horse related, and we have lots to look forward to in the New Year.

As I’m sure you all know by now the Quadrille have qualified for Olympia and are heading off to London to display their skills on 21st December. We wish them all the very best luck.

We have been updating our Facebook page and website regularly so please take a look every now and then to catch up with what’s going on.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and Happy New Year.

*Annie*

**Member News**

**Welcome**

Welcome to all our new members Laura Acton, Mary Davies, Helen Govier, Gloria Marshall, Rebecca Newman, Barbara Pritchard, Julie Reed, Susan Squire, Chloe Taylor-Baker, Sharon Thorne, Sara Thurgood, Rachel Waldron, Tabitha Waldron, Jessica Westwood.

*Ros Fisher-Smith*

**Thank you to Everyone!**

To show appreciation of all Helen's and Sarah's hard work as Chairman and Secretary, the Club made a donation of £200, out of Club funds, to Helen's chosen charity, Devon Hospiscare.  At the AGM, the Club gave Sarah a camellia for her garden and a case of red wine.  Helen could not attend the AGM so was given a silk flower arrangement afterwards.

In addition to this, Caroline organised a more personal collection to give them both something to choose themselves to remind them of the WRC.  They were both given a cheque for £132.50, which Helen is spending on a portrait  with her horse and dog, and Sarah on something for her new extension from the Exmoor decorator, Katie Lewis. *Caroline Lowes*

**Weddings**

Hayley got married to Kevin on the 6th of September at our local church of Chittlehampton. They travelled with their four bridesmaids, from the church to the reception at our home in three horses and carts, specially trained to drive for the day. The coloured trio of young horses were Pip, Mabel and Drifter.   
Many thanks to my Longpark team for preparing and driving the horses so well, especially Sam Simmons and Lauren Howard. Also to Annie Bear for making such lovely wedding favour cookies.  *Cheryl Mundy*

**Hello from our new Chairman, Caroline Lowes**

A quick word to introduce myself as the WRC’s new Chairman. I live just south of Witheridge which seems quite unusual, considering what a widespread membership we have these days, from Ilfracombe to Thorverton…..

I have been riding since I was 7 and that was 1963 so – you do the maths! I started off in the Cumberland Farmers Pony Club, then went to Karen Dixon’s mother’s yard, near Barnard Castle, to do my BHSAI and PC A test, a bit of eventing, a bit of hunting, a bit of team chasing – basically having fun with horses. After marrying David, we lived in New York City for three years, from where I managed to have one day’s hunting in Maryland and two “dude ranching” (riding and camping in the Rocky Mountains) holidays. On my brief visits back to England, I’d teach at Pony Club Camp, ride in the Lake District or hunt with the Taunton Vale (kind mother in law!)

Until we returned from the US and moved to the Rutland/Lincolnshire border, I had never been an owner, but always been lent horses – quite a varied bunch! But then I bought my fabulous Georgie (cheap, thanks to a blemish) on whom I hunted and evented and started my Riding Club career with the Rutland RC. She was the dam of Bloomer and Minpin, granddam of Stella and great granddam of the 2yo in the field here! Meanwhile my two children, now in their late 20s, hunted and pony-clubbed with the Cottesmore.

On the “if you can’t beat’em, join’em” principle, David started hunting about 15 years ago and was so hooked that he became deputy chief executive of the Countryside Alliance, at the time of the rallies, demos, marches, sleepovers in Parliament Square – you name it, we did it!

All this means that I am busy with hunting, hunting organisation and riding our own horses, B&B and the farm. Helen was such a knowledgeable and efficient chairman (the walking rulebook!) she’ll be a hard act to follow, but I know that working with two great secretaries the show will stay on the road! Although I am very busy. I do hope that you will be happy to call me if you have any queries, problems, suggestions. I like to talk directly to people and I would like all our members to feel wanted, whether non-riders, nervous/shy riders, non-competitive or competitive riders. Years ago, one of the first Fellows of the BHS, Janet Sturrock who evented well into her 70s, told me no matter how little you did with a good horse, as long as you were having fun, it was never wasted.

All ideas welcome – please call me on 01884 860663.

(did I say “a quick word”? Sorry!)

**AGM Update**

The evening was well attended, as usual, and a good opportunity to catch up with each other. This year we have had some changes to the Committee. Welcome to Caroline Lowes who is now Chair, Annie Bear and Ros Fisher-Smith are Joint Secretaries and Sian remains as Treasurer. Also welcome to Cindy and Maggi who join the Committee this year. We had lots of suggestions for training which will be taken up by the Training Group. We agreed that the Accumulator series of dressage and showjumping went well, and trophies were awarded to the winners. We plan to run this series again next year. Trophies were awarded to members, see below!

**Trophys!!**

Congratulations to Jane Phillips who won the summer Dressage accumulator, and to Sam Simmons who was the runner up. And Congratulations to Cheryl Mundy who won the Showjumping accumulator, and to Sam Simmons, who was again the runner up.

The other Trophys were awarded as follows:

Claire Philips and Pheasant, Prout memorial plate for Most improved.

Zoe Boyles, Downe Farm trophy for Ridden Hunter Trophy

Anne Plume and Willesly Whatnot, Yartie Memorial Trophy for best Veteran

The May family, Minstrel Mem Shield for Family Horse/Pony

Rackenford Cruiser, Bungle Memorial Trophy for best RC all rounder

Diva Dancer (Mabel), Roland Tong Shield for Best RC horse

Nicola Moon, Becky Smith, Alicia and Philipa Balfour, Georgina Bowman Memorial Trophy for Horse Trials

Thea (Shelly Pocock), Downe Farm Young Horse trophy

Cheryl Mundy, Scooby Memorial shield for the most loyal and committed member

Frances King, Archive Compting trophy for Best Volunteer

Carol Luxton, Daimler Cup for best Ridden Hunter

Sandy Blight Mem trophy, Sally Watts, Sandy Blight memorial trophy for carrying on in adversity

Sir Frank (Cindy Somerville) Racehorse trophy for best ex-racehorse

A copy of the AGM Minutes will be available on the WRC Website.

**WRC Christmas Party**

There were 37 of us, members, partners  and friends . We were welcomed by Mr Roberts and shown to the Crystal Suite which had a nice Christmas feel to it. I believe everyone enjoyed the Christmas meal, ending with coffee and mince pies. All very efficiently served .

 We then had the excellent Disco and I have to say WRC were there to the end. A really successful and fun evening was had by all.

 Thanks to everyone for taking part.

*Bridget Grieve*

**Rising Stars Team Events**

Our Rising Stars show jumpers had a successful outing to Conquest Equestrian Centre in November. Our team of Jane Penfold (Charlotte), Miriam May (Fairoaks Nemo) and Michelle Pocock (Thea) put in a great performance to finish 5th. Many of you will associate Jane with dressage rather than jumping and this was her first venture into the show jumping arena for quite some time! But her double clear with the lovely Charlotte has put her firmly on the radar for future show jumping teams! In fact the future looks bright for Witheridge RC show jumping with both Miriam and Shelley riding young, inexperienced but very promising horses who jumped fantastically, including a double clear from Shelley’s Thea.

The next Rising Stars competitions will be dressage in January and show jumping at Easter. We welcome anyone who would like to have a go, no matter how inexperienced, so look out for the schedules and let me know if you fancy joining in!

*Please contact Cindy Somerville on…somervillec@pbworld.com tel 07939 510085*

**Training Bursary**

Each year Western Counties Equine Hospital offers its clients the chance to win a training bursary of £500 to be used with a trainer of their choice.  This year’s categories were Pony Club and Riding Club.  To apply you had to write a letter stating you and your horse’s achievements and why you would benefit from the training bursary.  The Chair of the Riding Club (or Pony Club) had to write a supporting letter (this was Sian at the time).  The judges also phoned Sian for a lengthy chat about me!!  WCEH held a client evening in late September when the winners were announced.  And I was amazed and delighted to be a winner. We also won some vouchers, a rug and numnah.  I’ve already started lessons with Irene Perrett, which are going very well. It’s certainly well worth the effort to apply..

*Tamsin O’Connor*

**TRAINING UPDATE**

We are sorry to lose Jane Penfold from the training group. She has served us well both as an organiser and trainer. I am sure she will be offering more training through the club and is always willing to take personal bookings for training. She can be contacted on [janepenfold@aol.com](mailto:janepenfold@aol.com) or 01598 740114. Many thanks, Jane, for all your hard work.

We are very grateful to those people who volunteered to join the training group. You gave us a good choice from which to select someone who would complement those of us already in the group. It is so nice to have willing volunteers. We are delighted to welcome Julia Beggs to the group. She is a relatively new member of the club. She has a nice young horse she is bringing on and has a daughter who is a junior member.

For those of you who are new members, we offer training throughout the year at a number of different venues. These are on surface in the winter and we have access to a large flat field in the summer thanks to Andy and Mary Paxton – but also continue to use venues with a surface. We usually offer a course of 3 or 4 sessions of either flat work or jumping with a trainer. Group size is normally 2 of 3 riders to a group. We try to organise the groups into ‘ability’ groups (either horse or rider!) to match combinations of similar experience. Therefore we always ask you to let us know what you and your horse can do. Our regular trainers are used to all levels of experience and are happy to help all members get the best out of their horses. The cost of the trainer is split between those who have booked a place. We do not ask for money beforehand but, if you have to cancel too late for us to rearrange, we expect you to contribute to the cost so that no one else is left paying more than they expected. We also try to offer some ‘on-the-ground’ training – recent sessions have included *preparing for a show* and *lungeing*. They makea good opportunity for a training-come-social. Any other ideas would be welcome.

The year starts with indoor X-Country training with Tim Cheffings at Downe Farm on January 4th. This was arranged in October and is already overbooked with a long waiting list!

We will certainly be arranging more training with Tim and Vanessa in the indoor school in January and February before they start back into the eventing season.

We are meeting before Christmas to plan the rest of the winter/early spring programme of training. Do please get in touch with any of the group (contacts below) with any suggestions or requests. We will do our best to accommodate you. We always try to meet the requests of members and offer a range of day/evening or weekday/weekend training. It is impossible to please everyone but we do listen and try to do what we can to make sure the training you want is at a time that suits you – but make sure you tell us in good time.

Witheridge Riding Club Training Group

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Ros Fisher-Smith [fishersmith@eclipse.co.uk](mailto:fishersmith@eclipse.co.uk) 01398 341799

Caroline Lowes [caroline@dlowes.com](mailto:caroline@dlowes.com) 01884 860663

Tamsin O’Connor [tamsinandsteve@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tamsinandsteve@hotmail.co.uk) 07503 031486

**The Year Ahead**

We thought you might like to see what’s planned for next year so you can make time in your diary!. At the moment the events are mostly Area 12 and BRC. This list is a work in progress and will be updated regularly as more events are arranged.

**Forthcoming Events, 2015**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Event** | **Location** |
| 25th January  Sunday | FOTH Combined Training (DR and SJ) | Pontispool, Somerset |
| 8th February  Sunday | Area 12 Training | Pontispool, Somerset |
| 15th February  Sunday | FOTH Combined Training (SJ and XC) | Pontispool,Somerset |
| 28th February | Showjumping Competition | Kings Sedgemoor EC |
| 1st March | Intermediate Dressage comp | Stockland Lovell |
| 7th March  Sunday | Novice Winter SJ | Kings Sedgemoor EC |
| 4/5th April | Novice Winter Champs | Hartpury Glos |
| April | Witheridge Easter Dressage | Downe Farm, Witheridge |
| Friday 17th April | Visit to Vauterhill Stud - details TBC | High Bickington |
| Tues 21 to Fri 24th April | Witheridge RC Camp | Stockland Lovell, Somerset |
| 2/3rd May | Intermediate Winter Champs | Bury Farm, Bucks |
| 25th May | Dressage to Music | Kingston Maurward |
| May/June | FOTH Combined Training and Combined Challenge | Aston-le-Walls |
| June | Area 12 Training | Bicton Arena, |
| 28th June | Horse Trials | Bicton Arena |
| 4th/5th July | Summer Dressage and SJ | Chard EC |
| August | Horse Trials | Swalcliffe, Oxon |
| 5/6th September | National Championships | Lincolnshire Showground |
| October | Dressage to Music and Quadrille Selection |  |

**Newsletter Update – December 2014**

**Quadrille Team Results for Olympia!**

Just for those members who may not have heard the news, our Quadrille team put on a great display at Olympia on Sunday to come third. The costumes looked brilliant and they made a fantastic spectacle in that famous arena cheered on by a large number of WRC supporters

Well done to all the riders and to the ground crew who travelled with them! Look out for a write up in Horse and Hound and The BRC magazine.

**West Somerset & Devon Dressage Championships 2014 – Kings Sedgemoor EC**

Many thanks to everyone who supported the WSD Dressage Championships, my wonderful team of helpers, our 3 excellent judges who all donated part of their expenses back to our charities, all the riders and their amazing horses/ ponies, Jon and Charlotte at KSEC, the 7 clubs for donating prizes/ trophies, the lovely Kate Alford (event photographer who kindly donated photos to the champions and also a very generous raffle prize of a free photo shoot!) and the other prize donators, Hermione Perry from Brinicombe Equine and Roy Male from Wychanger Barton saddlery.

The day was a great success with some impressive performances between the boards and worthy winners – Cheryl Mundy in the Prelim and Danielle Balsdon in the Novice AND Elementary (this was a first in the history of the champs) Reserve champs were Sam Simmons, Cheryl Mundy again and Sally Ellis-Gray. Well done all, you will receive a training grant shortly.

All the photos are now online, via www.katealfordphotography.instaproofs.com – please have a look, Kate has done a great job taking lots of shots of everyone so am sure you will find one, if not more, lovely images to treat yourselves too.

The lucky winner of the main raffle prize of the photo shoot was NICKY CHAPMAN and we also gave out some other raffle prizes which will find their way to you, if you were a winner. Thank you everyone who bought tickets and I just wish we all could have won the photo shoot.

I’ve just got to finally tot up the money but it looks like we will be able to make a donation of £180 (proceeds of raffle and catering) to Horseshoes and Handprints, which I know will make a huge difference to them and to the families they help at their centre in Ilton near Ilminster (they have a website and facebook page to find out more about their great work). The remaining surplus from the day (around £60) will be donated to Breakthrough Breast Cancer, in memory and in support of those we know who have been affected by this nasty disease. Hopefully, this donation will take them a step closer to beating breast cancer and to fine tuning treatments until then.

Helen Goff

*Many thanks to Helen for running this competition. Very well organised, as always. Full results available on the download page of the club website*

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**Area 12 Novice Winter Dressage 2014 – Pontispool, 26th October**

Witheridge Riding Club was well represented at this competition. The standard was very high as always with 18 teams taking part. Everyone rode really good tests and there were some great scores.

The Witheridge Phoenix team of Tamsin O’Connor and Mellway Silver Sheen, Carolyn Day and Rowan, Dan May and Wodiena K, and Jane Phillips and Rackenford Lady May finished 4th.

The Witheridge Pegasus team of Alicia Balfour and Defining Trends, Nicola Moon and Kildromin Pluto, Becky Smith and Brigand, and Celia Bellamy and Topline Taliesin finished 6th.

The Witheridge Griffins team of Cheryl Mundy and Fat Boy Slim, Philippa Balfour and Beechfort Gem, Di Sealey and Dantsky, and Catherine Milward and Bonnie Prince Luso unfortunately missed out on the placings.

There were lots of individual placings too - in the Prelim team tests Tamsin was 1st, Cheryl was 4th, Philippa was 5th and Alicia was 6th in their arenas. In the Novice team tests Celia was 4th and Jane was 6th in their arenas.

Also, in the warm-up tests Tamsin came 3rd and Cheryl 6th in Prelim, and Jane came 6th in Novice.

**Future Dates**

Please note that the Area 12 competition at Pontispool on 15 February 2015 is not Combined training but "Eventer Challenge".

29th March 2015 – Wellbeck Dressage including qualifiers for West Somerset and Devon

Dressage Championships at Kings Sedgemoor E.C in October 2015