



# MEON RIDING CLUB

1968 - 2009

## NEWSLETTER

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## SEPTEMBER 2009

### HORSE TRIALS CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT

(CONTRIBUTED BY HELEN VERNON)

Mud mud glorious mud. Well that just about summed up the state of Washbrook Farm, Aston Le Walls – the venue for this year's Horse Trials Championships... Unfortunately, heavy rain on Thursday meant that most competitors arrived to a bog. However the weather improved over the weekend leading to good going.

Meon qualified Becky Sporne on Grace as an Individual in the Intermediate and a team in the Open. The Team comprised of Julia Batho on Just Hippy, Debbie Swan on Urban Legend, Helen Vernon on Monaco Finale and Becky Sporne, this time on Semilion.

Both classes were scheduled to be long format three day events, however at the rider briefing on Friday morning we were advised that, due to the adverse weather conditions, this might change. We were told that a decision would be made later in the day but continue as normal. So off we all went to prepare our horses for the first vet's inspection which we all passed, some with "flying" colours. This was followed by dressage tests. Becky was first to go in the Intermediate and did a shrewd test against some very strong competition. The Open team followed with Julia being 5th in her arena, Becky 2nd, Helen 12th and Debbie 14th. After dressage Meon were in 4th place.

Riders then had time to walk the cross country course before the update on the competition format. The rain had taken its toll on a section of the cross country which was withdrawn as were parts of the roads and tracks and the entire steeplechase phase. This was all very well communicated to competitors and an awful lot of work was undertaken by the organisers to ensure that the competition ran with as few eliminates as possible whilst ensuring the competitors' safety.

Endurance Day loomed and Becky was first to go for Meon as an individual in the Intermediate class. She performed an immaculate clear Cross Country taking all the direct routes to come home with 3.6 time penalties in testing conditions. Julia was the pathfinder for the Open team and was doing a sterling job until being caught out by an over exuberant Hippy deciding to try and leap up a steep bank to a very skinny hedge, missing his stride in the process. Julia stayed calm represented and came home with a few time penalties – kicking herself for the mistake. News was reported back to Helen, the next rider, that Julia had had a refusal so team tactics came into play. On a younger, less experienced horse, she decided to take the

long routes to ensure they got round. Monaco tried his heart out but a combination of testing ground conditions and the long routes took their toll on the time, with Helen coming home clear but with 21 time faults. Debbie was next and going very well up until the penultimate fence, a tricky combination of corners that was difficult for tiring horses. They unfortunately accrued 2 stops here but went on to complete. Finally Becky riding Semilion was on course and they did a sterling job. She took all the direct routes and came home clear with a handful of time penalties. The bad news was that at the end of day 2 the team had dropped to 9th. The good news was that we had all 4 horses complete the day sound for the final vets inspection.

Sunday loomed bright and sunny with just the final vets inspection and the show jumping to go. All horses were prepared for the trot up and Meon horses passed easily again – but this time with fewer antics!!! A number of horses were withdrawn or failed by the vet at this stage.

A two minute silence was then observed for Laurie Punnett, the Chairman of BRC who sadly died on Thursday 23 July.

Show Jumping was run in reverse order, with the leader going last. Becky was early to Show Jump on Grace and did a lovely clear. Regrettably they were not in the individual placings on this occasion. The Open Team all had 4 faults at different fences to retain the ninth placing. Individual placings in the Open went to Julia who was 7th and Becky 8th.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

September is going to be a really busy month! Our first event will be the **Meon Riding Club Hunter Trials at Iping on 6 September**. This is a new venue for us, which always makes it a bit more difficult to attract entries. Schedules were sent out last month, and are also available on the Club website, so please help to spread the word. We need one entry per member just to cover our costs, and two to make the sort of contribution to the expenses of our teams which we would like to do.

We also need helpers, both on the previous Saturday (meet us on the course from 9.30a.m onwards) and on the day itself. If you can spare the whole day that would be marvellous, but we know you all have other commitments so half-days are fine. Please

contact Penny Briggs (01730 892297) or email: woolmerlodge@yahoo.co.uk if you can help.

The next date is the **Eventers' Challenge at Blenheim Horse Trials on 11 September**. We have entered a team, and wish them the best of luck in this exciting new competition. Unfortunately information was sent out a bit late this year, so we missed the date for booking cheap advance spectator tickets. If you are able to get over there and support them I'm sure you will find it a good day out. They will be in action between about 15.00-16.00 hours.

The following Saturday, **12 September**, our competitors who qualified in the Area 17 Dressage and Show Jumping Qualifiers this Summer will be off to **Lincoln** for the **British Riding Clubs' Championships**. They will be competing against the best riders from Clubs all over the country, so getting into the ribbons is quite an achievement, but we hope they won't come home empty-handed.

The next week a dozen members are off to enjoy a riding holiday at **Stockton Lovell** from 17-21 September. After the wet weather of the last three months lets hope the Sun shines for them, though I'm sure they will be equipped for all eventualities!

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 22 OCTOBER** **WARNFORD VILLAGE HALL**

This meeting marks the end of the Summer season, and the beginning of the Winter season. The British Riding Clubs' Office has asked Clubs to review their Constitutions and amend as they consider necessary. The main change proposed is an increase in the minimum age of membership from 17 to 18. There will be a corresponding change in the minimum age for Senior competitions. This is proposed as having younger members requires us to comply with a whole raft of Child Protection legislation, which nobody on the Committee wants to take on. A copy of the amended Constitution is posted on the website, under Membership menu, with proposed changes shown. Please take the time to consider these carefully and if you have any comments let the Secretary know, (Wheelers Farm Froxfield, GU32 1DR or email: wheelers.farm@btinternet.co.uk). We would like to make it as good as we can before the meeting, and not get involved in lengthy discussions on the night. Please also inform us of any other items you would like included on the agenda. If you currently have a Club trophy in your possession (including those from last year's show), please make sure they have been engraved, and give them a good polish, as we

would like them back. If you are coming to the AGM then by all means bring it with you, but if not please give it to a Committee member. It's your responsibility to return it safely, not ours to have to chase you for it!

### **CLUB OPEN INDOOR SHOW JUMPING,** **CROFTON, 28 NOVEMBER**

Schedules for this are now available. We have included a new team class this year, so please do your best to get your friends to make up a team with you. You each jump individually, and your individual round counts for the team placings as well! This is the format used in Riding Club Qualifiers, so if you are hoping to be in a Club team this Winter this is your opportunity to try it out.

### **NEW MEMBERS**

Miss Michelle Keeley, 21, Stockbridge Rd. Winchester;

Miss Patricia Caddy, 35, Holmesland Drive, Botley;  
Mrs. Jacqui Young-Ballinger, Redmayes, Steep Marsh.

At this time of the year the major BRC competitions are over, and we are half way through the Club year. We always welcome new members, but would like to point out they will get better value for money by joining from 1 January 2010. BRC affiliation fees are going up next year, and our subscription rate will have to go up to cover this increase. The new subscription rate will be decided at the AGM, and membership application forms for 2010 will be available after the AGM.

### **ACCESS**

I am pleased to report that the proposal to build two wind turbines very close to the South Downs Way at East Meon has been withdrawn.

### **RESPONSIBILITY AND COST SHARING**

The latest Government proposal to separate us from our hard-earned cash is a levy of £10-50 each on horses! They claim this is needed (a) to cover the cost of preventing and dealing with future outbreaks of animal disease, and (b) the cost of setting-up a quango to administer this scheme. None of this was mentioned in the last Labour party manifesto. If you wish to add your name to the protestors, you can sign the petition on the Downing St. website: <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/ntht09#detail>, and/or write to your MP c/o Houses of Parliament, Westminster, London W1.