

# Horsham & District Riding Club

## National Horse Trials Championships

<b>LOCATION:</b>	Aston Le Walls, Northants	<b>DATE:</b>	5 - 8th August 2010
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Horsham were in the unique position of having qualified senior teams for these championships at all three levels – novice, intermediate and open. In addition Katie Roberts had qualified as a junior individual.

These popular championships had attracted many teams from all over the country, including those from Scotland who had been travelling 2 days to take part in the finals! The open and intermediate teams do a 3 day event and the novice teams do a 2 day event.

We all travelled up on the Thursday to set up camp in lorries and tents and settle the horses in the temporary stabling provided on site, ready for the competition which started on the Friday. With riders and support crew, we had 27 people representing the club, and our distinctive turquoise polo shirts were soon a common sight around the venue. However it was bit crowded in the team gazebo for the BBQ supper !

Friday started early with the first of 2 trot ups and vet checks for the open and intermediate teams. All horses were passed fit to compete and went to prepare for their dressage later in the day.

### Junior Individual

Katie and Josh had a busy day on Friday with all three phases of their one day event to go. Josh was trying his best in the dressage arena and Katie was fighting the early nerves to complete an accurate test and lie mid-table. They then did a great clear round in the showjumping where the course builder had included some interesting optional jumps to test the riders. Next it was the solid but inviting fences on the cross country, over the BE intro course. Josh was now in his element as he enjoys his hunting and made nothing of the fences and Katie finished with just a couple of time penalties having jumped a double clear and a well deserved 11th place.

### Senior Open Team

Unfortunately due to injury, we were only a team of 3, but there was still optimism in the camp as Helen Millichamp was on the experienced Arkweld who had been placed at the intermediate championships 2 years ago. She was joined by Sam Gates and the athletic little grey Trojans Tern, and Lucy Kenward on her substitute horse - Penny Taneborn's coloured mare Pepsi. All 3 regularly compete BE and were fit and raring to go so hopes were high.

They all did good dressage tests on the Friday which meant they were lying 4<sup>th</sup> as a team over night. Saturday was endurance day. They had to do 15mins of roads and tracks, then straight into the steeplechase and then a further 30 mins of roads and tracks before a compulsory rest in the 10 min box before setting off on the cross country course. Everyone had spent the last 6 weeks getting the horses supremely fit for this and it paid dividends as they all looked great as they dismounted in the 10 minute box and vets checked their heart rates (horses that is!) before being allowed to tackle the XC course. Our support crews were busy running from steeplechase to the XC start to assist horses and riders and pass on team tactics for the XC. This was run over the BE Novice course and it was quite big and imposing. There was a massive table running down hill which was scary as riders were either not checking and taking off miles away, or braking too late and getting underneath it or even banking it ! (see picture gallery) Helen was first to go and made it look easy, flying round clear, with just 11 time penalties. Sam was next and was clear up to the owl hole which "Thistle" had never seen a fence like this before and put in a last minute stop to dislodge Sam and graze his knees on the brush. Sam wisely retired him there and got him checked out by the vets but was fine. However this meant we were down to just 2 riders and out of the team competition. Lucy and

Pepsi had little time to prepare for these championships together as Pepsi had come in as a late substitute for Teddy, who was lame. But they were going well before having 2 stops XC over a couple of the smallest fences, to finish with 40 penalties and time faults.

Sunday morning Helen and Lucy had to present their horses for the final trot up and vet check. Always a nerve racking moment, to ensure they had come through the grueling XC day, and were still fit and well enough to complete the final day of competition. Both looked a picture in the early morning sun and were passed fit. Helen had a chance of individual honours until picking up 12 faults in the showjumping to finish 15<sup>th</sup>, and Lucy had 2 down to finish 19<sup>th</sup>. These were still very good performances and had done well to even complete what was a very stiff test of horse and rider that had caused a lot of trouble on XC day. Only 5 teams completed the whole competition and three of these were actually Area representative teams rather than just a club side. Something we may have to look into for next year to ensure we can start with a full team of four.

### **Senior Intermediate Team**

This was a relatively inexperienced team of horses. Both Helen and Sam having their second ride of the weekend on their young horses together with Claire Hamshaw on the 7 year old coloured "Marshall's Law".and Ros and the experienced "Tommy" were anchor man.

They all passed the first trot up and vet check, with just a heart stopping moment as Tommy was asked to trot again, before being passed fit. The dressage then went extremely well with Sam lying 2<sup>nd</sup> in her arena with Franke, and Claire lying 3<sup>rd</sup> in her arena. Helen, riding Jackie Davidge's black mare Jubilee Star also did a good test but Tommy was not appreciating the hard ground. This was good enough for the team to be lying in 2<sup>nd</sup> place overnight out of 21 teams and everything to play for endurance day on Saturday.

Helen and Sam knew their way round the roads and tracks and steeplechase and set off over the BE pre novice track, which was quite big and testing but well built and inviting. It too caused its fair share of problems as first Helen had 2 stops then Sam had 2 stops going into the first water. She did very well to get Franke through at the 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt and then through the 2<sup>nd</sup> water at the dew pond fence with some strong positive riding ! But this had seriously dented the team's chances. Ros and Tommy looked much more at home galloping XC and flying all these intermediate fences to finish clear, just outside the optimum time. Claire who was riding in her first 3 day event was making it look easy. They coasted round the course, making nothing of the sunken road, double of corners and 2 water complexes to finish clear and pick up just 2.8 time penalties and leave them lying 7<sup>th</sup> going into the final day.

It was good to see that all 4 horses were none the worse for wear on Sunday morning and all were passed fit at the very tense trot up and vet checks, but it was comforting to see a familiar face in chief steward - Donald was dressed for the summer weather in straw trilby and red trousers !

The showjumping was run in reverse order of merit so it was a shame we were 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> to go ! Sam finished a disappointing weekend on a high note with a lovely clear round on Franke who would have won his section "if only" they had gone clear at the water ! She had however done well to take part at all, as there had been an accident at home on the day before we were due to leave where there had been a fire in her lorry, leaving her without transport and Dad in hospital undergoing surgery for burns and hand injuries - which must have been a worry for her throughout the weekend. So thanks to Sam for keeping the team in tact and to Lucy who offered to take Sam's horses in her lorry at the last minute. Typical Horsham Team spirit and commitment from the start !

Helen then showjumped Jubilee Star but unfortunately had 4 down to add 16 penalties to their overnight score. This meant that the team was out of the running and there was no real point in asking Tommy to jump on the hard ground so Ros withdrew him. However Claire still had a chance of individual honours so she showjumped and had 2 down but the course was causing trouble and this was still good enough for a brilliant 10th place.

## **Senior Novice Team**

The novice team had been supporting the other teams on the Friday but as Saturday dawned reality was setting in that their 2 day event was about to get under way. The team was a mixture of young natural talent and mature riders with experience so we were in with a good chance, having already knocked out last year's national champions at the area qualifier .

Saturday was dressage and showjumping .Tiffany Tasney rode a very accurate test on her husband's coloured horse Another Artist for 34.2 pens. Ruth Burgess rode a composed test for 36.3 pens with her 5 year old Little Victory. Pam Nixon, who came into the side to substitute for poor Sonia Marfllet who could not get time off work, rode a competent test on Oliver for 38.4 pens and Jan Allan remembered her test to secure 46.3 pens on her lovely grey Bobbit.

The showjumping was up to height with a couple of fences where the riders had options to jump either uprights or spreads, depending on what suits their horse. All our girls went clear and made it look easy! Horsham added some of their humour to the commentary when Tiff's occupation was revealed as a pole dancer ! Tiff is this true ???????

So Saturday night was supposed to be a relaxed evening with a hog roast and open air bar but we were busy with calculators whirring away sorting out times for the next days roads and tracks, steeplechase and cross country. The open and intermediate riders were assisting on kilometer split times and giving the girls the benefit of their experiences from the previous day.

Sunday soon dawned. It was an early start but the sun was shining and shorts and white legs started to appear from Horsham's lorries ! The stables were soon busy with everyone plaiting and making last minute preparations. Breakfast could not be contemplated for most until well into the afternoon when the competition was over ! Tiff was our path finder and set off with purpose on the endurance phase. All clear over the roads and tracks and steeplechase and soon away from the 10 minute box onto cross country. The course was the BE intro course and was very encouraging for the bold horse and rider. Another Artist loves his hunting so just ate up the ground to finish a magnificent clear inside the time and finish on his dressage score. Pam was next to go and she too was clear and just slightly over the optimum time for 4 time pens. Ruth then rode a lovely clear round on young Vic but a watch malfunction half way round meant she lost track of the time and unfortunately finished with 11 time pens when she could easily have made it within the optimum time as they were cruising home. The final Horsham pair to complete the weekend of competition was our most senior member, the 72 year old galloping granny, Jan Allan! Jan has not evented for 50 years but hunts regularly and was loving the challenge of the endurance day, especially the steeplechase as she used to point to point. As long as she remembered her way the XC course was not going to present them with any problems and they coasted round for a brilliant clear with just a couple of time pens. So this concluded our challenge for team honours and we waited patiently for the scores to go up.

With all 4 riders completing double clears was this enough to secure a placing? Well it was just, as we came 10<sup>th</sup> out of 30 teams on a score of 121.7 pens. The time faults were expensive as the winning team was Berkely with 98.5 pens but Tiff had got individual 6<sup>th</sup> and Pam 10<sup>th</sup> so we finished with a clutch of huge rosettes and beaming faces to end a wonderful weekend.

Thanks must go to all the riders and Donald who put in so much training and effort to prepare for this event. And to the support crew, helpers and volunteers who travelled up to assist the riders and make it one of the most enjoyable weekends I have had with the club.

A small selection of the many photos taken over the weekend are in the picture gallery on the website. A disc will be available with all the photos for anyone who wants a copy. Just give me a call.

Report by Max Gayler  
Proud Chef D'Equipe !