

# Horsham & District Riding Club

## London and South East Regional Championships

<b>LOCATION:</b>	Vicarage Farm, Sunbury	<b>DATE:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2008
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This is the last championships of the season and brings together the Area Qualifiers from the home counties, in all four disciplines – Horse Trials, Dressage, Riding Tests, and Showjumping all at Novice level.

As Sunday dawned, we had just had one of the worst night's weather this year, with torrential rain and high winds. The forecast for the rest of the day was not much better so it was doubtful if the event was even going to run, but in true British spirit we all set off to Sunbury on Thames! Our teams were representing Area 13 in the Horse Trials and Riding Test.

There were 21 teams in the Horse Trials and we were reigning National Champions so there were high expectations, although our team included 2 changes from Offchurch, – Lizzie Gorringer on her lovely bay – Bright Future and Sam Gates, who was in the original qualifying team back in May. The dressage went well and we were in the lead after it. The Show Jumping track was long and up to height – 2'9" – 3' and caught quite a few out. Lizzie, Jane and Sam had 1 down each and Jo Radford Smith did a brilliant clear in slippery conditions.

This still gave us a narrow lead going into the Cross Country phase. The XC course was big ! Most fences were at least 3' and the ditches looked huge. There was a serious coffin at fence 9 that was to cause havoc, a twisting treble of rails where you could waste a lot of time, and if you got far enough round the course there was a frighteningly wide trakhener as the penultimate fence !

Lizzie was our pathfinder and just has 2 stops at the first part of the coffin plus quite a few time penalties. Then Jane Silcock went, and was hampered by another rider as she caught them up. This rider had stops at many fences which didn't help "Tommy" who also thought there might be something frightening there! So, unfortunately they had 3 refusals at different fences, plus time faults, but at least they completed as many combinations were getting eliminated (21 riders). Sam went next and she was lying in 2<sup>nd</sup> place individually after a very good dressage. She did a brilliant clear with only 9 time penalties to add so finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. This was 1 of only 6 clear rounds out of 80 !! Finally Jo and "Henry" ploughed through the mud at the end of the day with just 1 run-out when attempting to save time by taking the direct route at the corner. So, out of 21 teams, we were 1 of only 3 to get all 4 riders home safely ! The course had caused so many problems – it was carnage in the rain ! Unfortunately we clocked up too many time penalties as well as the jumping faults so were not in the placings, but I have never been to a championships where even the winning team - Abinger Forest - had scored so many penalties – 193 in total – an average of 64 per rider.

The Riding Test team also had to endure some awful weather and tried their best on slippery grass arenas to look graceful ! Ros Managed it – and won her arena on a great score of 77.5%. Ruth Burgess, back in the teams with her new youngster "Red " – who is only 4 so it was an exciting party for him. Ruth rode a very tactful test for 70.5% and an encouraging 8<sup>th</sup> place in her arena. Teresa Lavender and "Popapicolina" put in their usual dependable performance for 65% and 14<sup>th</sup> place, and Libby Powell and "Ernie", who would rather have been on the XC course, got a respectable score of 61%. The winning team was Tadley on 15 points, then Berkshire on 21 points. It was very close at the top so with 23 points we came a very close 5<sup>th</sup> out of 14 – well done to everyone.

Max Gayler  
Chef D'Equipe