

Lothians Riding Club

Report from the British Riding Club National Championships 2011 in Lincoln.

Lothians Riding Club fielded 2 teams to compete at the National Championships this year. In a first for the club, we fielded a Novice Dressage team of Jenny Scott on Miss Ellie, Debbie Millar on Silver Lining aka Victor, Dana Grant on Derw Destiny aka Sammy and Karen Richardson on Coolkill Tornado aka Sid

We also fielded a Novice Show Jumping Team of Duncan Owen on Ruby B, Ivar McLeish on Braidlaw Star aka Hope, Jan Simpson on Freckleton Enchilada aka Chilli and Janis Mack on Zoe.

Day 1 - Friday 16th September

It had been agreed that we would team up horses and lorries to share the costs. We each met up around 7.30am and started off on the A1 to meet up and travel in convoy. Four lorries were now on the road, with Ivar coming down a bit later.....(much much later as it turned out....) Our Chef d'Equipes (Jim & Julia) also joined in the convoy (but they managed to stay in bed a wee bit longer than the rest of us!).

Three of the lorries (Duncan's, Andy's and Donna's) all stopped off at a service station south of Scotch Corner to give both the drivers and horses a break. The people all piled into the service station for some much needed sustenance as 5am/6am seemed like a long time ago, Janis continued on as her horse Zoe is very reluctant to eat or drink in the lorry and she wanted to get there asap.

Still no Ivar!

So after a very lovely breakfast, some water for horses we all set off again. Duncan told us we only had 100 miles or so to go and would not take long!..... 10 minutes back on the A1 and we hit traffic. An accident had occurred which meant we ended up in diversions and about an extra 2hrs on the journey. The convoy got split up but we all arrived with ½ hour of each other (*although Duncan....who knows the route like the back of his hand*) took a wrong turning.....*I think co-pilot was having a snooze and got the blame !!!??*

Still No Ivar!

Once we arrived at the showground (which is huge!) The riders went off with the horses to get their passports checked and get stable allocations, also to have their hats checked and tagged. Meanwhile everyone else started getting the camp setup with tents, gazebos etc

Luckily we were allocated the permanent stables this year and in a great spot. All hands on deck to we set off to get the straw (fair trek away) to bed down the horses. In true team spirit we also bedded down Ivar's 2 stables as *Still No Ivar!!*

Once horses settled, some decided to ride their horses, while others took them for a walk round and a pick of grass.

The show jumping team then went off with their chef d'Equipe Julia to walk the course's. There were 12 jumps in total, with a double and a treble to negotiate. The jumps were well up to height with plenty of scary fillers but the team thought they would ride well.

Unfortunately Victor, Debbie's dressage horse, found it all quite stressful this being his first ever trip away from home (i.e. stabled). Debbie and Duncan tried really hard to convince him that he was fine but not to be.... They called the vet out to sedate him, which meant that he would not be able to compete. So our travelling reserve Jan on Chilli would stand in. Debbie was understandably upset but very bravely put it down to experience.

Back at Camp Lothians !!!!

Ivar Arrives !!!

Poor Ivar, his lorry was not playing the game.... 4 breakdowns before Berwick..... his mechanic thought it was just Ivar's skinny legs that could not keep the throttle pushed down and that is why it was losing power.... Aaawww. Anyway his mechanic fixed the lorry and Ivar and Julie arrived about 10pm ish....

We all had some food, wee drinks and a few laughs before hitting the sack knackered.

Day 2 – Saturday 17th September – Competition Day

Well, it was up bright and early for everyone. It was a nice sunny morning although quite windy.

Show Jumping Report :-

The show jumping team were all on in the morning. The atmosphere is quite buzzy and all the horses were on their toes. Janis was first up and felt Zoe was not quite right and this was emphasised by her having an uncharacteristic 8 faults. Unfortunately the vet was called again.... Turned out Zoe was suffering from a bit of colic. Janis did therefore not part-take in round two and headed off to her son's home, which is close by, a few hours later.

Jan and Chilli were up next and had a beautiful clear round...however ended up with a couple of time faults, which none of us could explain as it did not look like a slow round.

Next up Duncan and Ruby. It was all going beautifully till near the end. As Duncan came up to a double which is bordered by a hedge separating two rings, a large grey horse was coming towards Ruby, who took her eye off the fence and it was then too late to jump it, so had a run out... the rest of the course went well and Duncan ended up with a couple of time faults along with a run out.

Ivar and Hope were last to go and executed a beautiful clear round.... The team were very excited going into the second round, although only had 3 scores to count.

Show Jumping Round 2 – Jan and Chilli had another fabulous clear round this time with no time faults. Duncan and Ruby had a great round and Ruby really tried her heart out but had 1 down. It was then up to Ivar who can really cope with the pressure. His round was brilliant but very unlucky to have 1 fence down.

Overall the Show Jumping Team came in 12th place (just out of the rosettes) but all very pleased with their horses. Jan and Chilli came a very respectable 21st overall.

Jenny had also qualified as an individual in the Style Jumping with Miss Ellie and did a brilliant round with a great score but was just out of the placing's...

Dressage Report

The dressage arena's (all 13 of them) were quite a trek from the stables and were in a huge flat field. Thank goodness for our Chef d'Equipe Jim who sussed out where each of us was competing.... It just looked like a mass of white boards. You would think that the atmosphere would be calm...but it wasn't.. the dressage horses were quite hyped with the exception of Sammy who really took it all in his stride.

Dana had qualified as an individual for the Riding Test so was first on and did a brilliant test which earned her a 3rd place in her arena and she got a lovely yellow rosette.

Jenny was on first for the teams with Miss Ellie and did a really nice test but Miss Ellie was really on her toes and Jenny had to work very hard to keep her contained but was pleased with her performance.

Karen and Sid were next up and she too had to work very hard trying to keep Sid calm who thought bucking and squealing was the order of the day. Just as Karen went up the centre line the heavens decided to open.... and we mean open. Karen continued through her test which she was really pleased but knew that Sid was a bit tense due to the rain.

Jan and Chilli who were standing in for Debbie and Victor were up next. Jan was soaked to the skin as she was watching the end of Karen's test. So a very wet Jan and Chilli were up next and did a really nice test and remembered it, considering that you are not allowed commanders and Jan only had a few hours to memorise it and no practice time.

Last to go was Dana and Sammy. Dana had decided not to do as much warm up as Sammy had already had been and done a test. Even cool, calm and collected Sammy did some bucks when Dana asked for medium canter in the warm-up. Test was going fab till the last canter transition, where he went a bit disunited and Dana heard a crunch and thought "oh that'll be the boards then!" . Back to trot and better strike off and the rest of the test went smoothly. Back at the stables though, Dana and her friends saw some blood coming from his coronary band, they think he either struck into himself or did strike the boards. So cue the Vet for the third time, luckily it was not too bad and vet put a dressing on.

The dressage scores came up and we all felt that our tests were better than the scores they earned, they were pretty low compared to what we are used to, all the scores were early to mid 60%'s. However this is championships and the standards are high and the scoring is tough.... The dressage team came in 18th overall which is a great achievement for the first dressage team to qualify and we were all pleased with the way our horses performed.

Back to Camp Lothians

All competition over, horses fed and put to bed everyone could then relax. First on the menu was Food for the people as everyone was starving, you don't get much of a chance to eat during the day. Some had Chinese carry-out and others finished off what they had in their lorries.

Second on the menu was some drinkies!!!!.. (well lots of drinkies), we all managed to get around the gazebo (all 20 odd of us) and had a great laugh, so much so that our faces and sides were aching.

There was a lot of hilarity about "smurfs!".... most of us had on Lothians Riding Club blue hoody's throughout the weekend....everywhere you looked there was someone with a Lothians Hoody on.....(it seemed like hundreds of us) Only down side when there are so many wearing them they do represent a bunch of smurfs.... (Please do not let that put you off buying one, they are fab) ... but it provided us all with huge amounts of entertainment.

Luckily (for everyone else on the showground) we were located at the top of the lorry park as our laughter could be heard from the stables!. We all called it a night well after mid-night and headed off to our tents and lorries.

Day 3 – Sunday 18th September – Going home

All up.... Not quite so bright and early this time !!. Stables had to be cleared out completely, so that done we all got organised to get on the road.

Journey home was pretty uneventful, Ivar made it home with no break downs whoo hoo, however Duncan's exhaust exploded/fell off.... Phone call to Jim who advised him to turn up the radio and kick on!.

Summary

A great experience and a fantastic time was had by all... just a few hic-cups along the way, lorry breakdown, sedated horse, colicky horse, cut horse and blown exhaust!! But we would do it all again in a minute.

Thank you again to everyone who supported the teams to get to Lincoln it was very much appreciated.

Lothians Riding Club