

Showjumping and Riding Club Riders Enjoy Great Success competing with British Dressage in the British Dressage Northern Region

As a freelance trainer, I am interested in all areas of competition dressage and if it wasn't for the British Dressage Northern Region I would never have been encouraged to train as a British Dressage Judge. I have attended judge training days with some of Britain's top listed judges organised by the British Dressage Northern Region throughout the UK. My training has spanned from Richmond and Northallerton Equestrian Centre to Vale View in Leicester, Ledston Equine Centre in Castleford and the National Championships at Stoneleigh. These sessions have taught dressage from the eye of the judge and have updated my ideas on test riding and teaching. My friends and clients who ride at unaffiliated dressage or who compete with British Eventing/British Showjumping have really enjoyed coming along too. So much so that after some persuasion they decided to take a big step and go affiliated!

The affiliated experience:

Angie who has competed at unaffiliated dressage, show jumping, eventing and taken part in riding club activities decided to do some training to help her start and compete unaffiliated dressage/eventing with her new horse Jake. At the first glance I knew there was potential for a good dressage test and so raised the bar, set the challenge to train for affiliated dressage and get the confidence to go for it. We even made a deal that if I found Angie a dressage saddle she would compete BD, so within a fortnight we had a lovely Ideal Jessica on the horses back and the entry filled in for Richmond on Sat 21st January for Prelim 7. This day soon came about and with a few tweaks here and there and a lot of hard work it was time to give it a go. With a gentle but generous warm up allowing plenty of time to prepare, Angie went into the arena and rode a test which we were both smiling about and very pleased with. The scores were in and we were absolutely delighted to hear about their 3rd place with 66%. With the helpful and encouraging judge's comments, Angie had such a fantastic experience. She now aims to become a member in order to try and achieve another +62% to qualify for Area Festivals and in time work up through the levels.

Jo used to compete primarily with BSJA and when she found out that her showjumper Indie was also quite good at dressage and the fact that her dressage training/competing helped with her showjumping; she decided to give BD a go. Over the past two years she has achieved so much at Prelim and Novice level including Regional Championships qualifications that this year she has decided to step up to Elementary and possibly Medium level. Saturday the 21st at Richmond was booked in for a Novice test and then Elementary 50 (which is quite a challenging move up). The scores were in and Jo was thrilled to win the Elementary with just over 64% and come 2nd in the Novice with just over 65%. She will now aim to maintain points, placings and percentages to qualify for the Regional Championships at Elementary level and go to some BYRD's training.

Why affiliate?

- You don't have to be a BD member; it is now so easy to affiliate and there is a lot to take away from competing with British Dressage
- It is not as scary as it seems; the judges are all qualified and therefore you are guaranteed to receive correct scores and constructive feedback on your score-sheets

- The venues are well organised and competing affiliated really raises your standards in test riding and training
- You can also qualify to compete at area festivals by sending in two score sheets over the threshold percentage and you can even start competing by having a go at Walk-Trot tests.

BD competitions encourage the correct riding and training of the horse and although it has some of the world's leading riders competing and training there is a very precious group which BD is destined to encourage; new starters in affiliated dressage. It is those people who want to achieve the correct way of going, work up through the levels, improve their BE dressage scores or even improve their scores at unaffiliated events like Trailblazers.

The **British Dressage Northern Region** is a valuable segment of British Dressage and is available to members and non-members catering for every individual need and interest; namely social events, dressage career development, judge training, BYRDS (young rider training), test riding and dressage training days. The Northern Region even has its very own dressage teams which compete at Inter Regional and Home International level. All you have to do to become part of the Northern region is to join the mailing list and you can find out the dates for a whole range of events. To join the mailing list you can e-mail the Northern Regional Development Officer Sarah Huntridge SarahHuntridge@britishdressage.co.uk or join the facebook page: The Official British Dressage "NORTHERN" Region Group. Whatever your level of dressage you can find all the information you need to progress by visiting the British Dressage website at www.britishdressage.co.uk select Regional Activities then Northern.

Hope to see you soon.

Lucinda Bird