

## BYRDS INTER REGIONAL 2009 REPORT

Yes, not to be outdone by their senior counterparts - our Eastern Prada team brought home the spoils for the region in the BYRDS Inter Regional as well!!

37 teams from all over Scotland, Wales and England converged on Keysoe for two days of fierce competition. This year for the first time, all tests ridden over the weekend were 'rider tests' as opposed to dressage tests. Teams, made up of riders from A, B, C and Fledgling squads rode tests over the two days at their relevant level. In between much partying was done, and team spirit was in great supply! The East set up camp around Lorrie's caravan with BBQ, flags, bunting and gazebos and partied on down! Eleanor brought the requisite selection of chocolate and sweets (purely for reasons of raising blood sugar levels when required in our athletes of course!!) and everyone had a great time! The rain was a bit of a dampner on Saturday night - but undeterred, sausages were sizzled and drinks consumed. At that stage, our Prada team were lying in 3rd place with everything to ride for the next day.

Sunday dawned bright, with the overnight rain making the carpark and temporary stabling area a little more soggy, but undeterred, our riders rose to the challenge! Eleanor spent two days in the indoor school warming everyone up, and Lorrie did her normal sterling job of watching every test, boosting riders' confidence, calming down parents and generally keeping everyone happy!

The sun was shining as the 150 or so riders gathered in the arena on Sunday afternoon for the prize giving. Islay Auty gave a rousing speech telling the assembled riders "some of you standing here today will be our riders of the future, and British team members". There were awards for the individual winners in each squad first of all. We had two good placings in the A Squad - Michelle Wakefield in 3rd and Michelle Watson in 4th. Both Michelle's now go on to the prestigious A squad ride-off at Hartpury next weekend. Just out of the top 10 in 14th was Sam Collins.

The B Squad saw Georgina Weedon in 4th and a flurry of our riders just out of the top 10 - Eve Olive in 11th, Heather Jeffers, 12th, Aimee Witkin 13th and Issy Whiting in 14th - a great result for our girls in a hotly contested section with 43 riders. The C Squad saw two of our riders gaining individual honours - well done to Natalie Roberts in 9th and Beth Turnbull in 10th. All three of our Fledgling riders did brilliantly to finish in the top 10 out of a class of 22. Bethany Rose Horobin was 2nd, Imogen Ablett 3rd and Ruth Hole 6th - what a fantastic result!

The climax of the whole weekend, and the reason that so many BYRDS riders train all through the winter, is, of course, the team competition. It is always hard to tell over the weekend quite who is winning, much time is spent at the scoreboard with notes and sums being done to try and see who may be in the running. In reverse order, the results were announced, and at last, the Eastern Prada team were revealed as the 2009 Champions! The team was made up of **Michelle Watson, Georgina Weedon, Sam Hawkins and Bethany Rose Horobin**. Michelle has been a fantastic supporter of the Eastern region ever since her pony days. Now riding in young riders with her own GDH

Florestans Fire, Michelle, who runs her own training yard in Essex stated "It's been a long time coming, but it was worth the wait!" Georgina Weedon and The Smoke Jumper helped the team with two great tests in the B squad. Fledgling star Bethany Rose Horobin, who scored a 3<sup>rd</sup> and a 2<sup>nd</sup> place over the weekend was another vital member of the team. Bethany is another rider who has supported the East for several years now - and thanks also to her Dad Peter for the fantastic photographs! Completing the Prada team was Sam Hawkins riding her own On Pluto's Planet.

**WE ARE THE 2009 CHAMPIONS!!!**



**PRADA TEAM**

Sam Hawkins

Michelle Watson

Georgina Weedon

Bethany Rose Horobin



### **THE BURBERRY TEAM**

Gabby Lucas    Michelle Wakefield    Imogen Ablett    Rosie Daniell

Our Burberry team did a great job to finish in 8th place - so well done to **Michelle Wakefield, Rosie Daniell, Gabby Lucas and Imogen Ablett!** In fact, the East did brilliantly overall, as all five of our teams finished in the top 20 - a great result with 37 teams competing altogether! Well done to the Mulberry Team in 11th - Issy **Whiting, Heather Jeffers, Natalie Roberts, Ruth Hole**, the Gucci Team in 18th - **Emma Hester, Eve Olive, Beth Turnbull and Sarah Thomas**, and the Versace Team in 20th - **Sam Collins, Aimee Witkin, Harriette Williams, Alicia Patrick.**

Lorrie told the team "I am so proud of you all. You have worked so hard for this, have all behaved beautifully over the weekend, and have been a joy to work with". When asked if she was pleased to go out on a high (Lorrie ceases her role as BYRDS Rep at the end of this year) she replied "I haven't gone yet – we still have the Home International and Sheepgate!" So all I can say to the rest of the country is – watch out – The East are coming!!