

COME AND SEE WHAT BRITISH DRESSAGE HAS TO OFFER IN THE EAST!

We held a very successful demo on Monday 12th April at Towerlands, showcasing what our region does. Over 250 people enjoyed an evening of dressage, with all our different areas performing. The evening started with an introduction from Eleanor Collins, who then went into the BYRDS section. She started with three of our youngest riders - India, Claire and Christie showing what kinds of exercises they do with their ponies (they are 8 and 9 years old). Then came Lauren and also George Twyman - flying the flag for the several boys that we had at camp - and if you look at the top of the sport, which is dominated by male trainers, riders and judges, you will see how important it is to start young! 15 year old Jade followed this, and finally it was the turn of our older riders (18 - 24 year olds). Our fantastic BYRDS quadrille was next - riding to "Tonight is going to be a good night" (very appropriate!) Aimee Witkin, Bethany Rose Horobin, Beth Thurnbull and Imogen Ablett rode brilliantly, doing some very intricate moves, crossing in and out of each other - and making it all look very easy! This was followed by the Judges spot - where Sue Darken, Hayley Liddiard and Pam Bushall talked about two tests. The first was Ruth Hole and her Mum Rachel showing how it should NOT be done!! Very entertaining, and Rachel, I do think your talents are wasted - you should be on the stage!!! Then came Claire Gallimore, one of our star BYRDS riders who has risen up through the ranks to be a British Team Pony Rider. Claire and Gigolo rode a beautiful test showing how it should be done, and even got a couple of "9, perhaps even 10" from the judges!

After a short interval where people asked questions and picked up information, we resumed with Michel Assouline and Jo Pitts. Michel explained how the Para system works, and Jo very candidly chatted about her disability and answered questions about riding with one side that does not work! Amazingly, seeing her ride, you would not even think she was disabled, so to hear that her right side is almost completely paralysed was really impressive.

The Senior Riders followed, with a short talk from Paul Hayler about what we get up to in the region, and a lesson for Claire Lambert on her young horse (all good practise for the Premier League next week, as Paul kept the audience clapping for a long time afterwards until she calmed down - the horse that is, not Claire!) Louise Clark then rode her Freestyle test which was lovely to watch and reminded us why Louise is always such a great team member!

After the prize draw for all those who had filled in the questionnaires (thank you!) the Trainers came in and rode a lovely musical ride to end the evening. All on their advanced horses - the ride was made up of Paul Hayler, Julie Hugo, Eleanor Collins, Dan Sherriff, Ruth Hurst and stand in trainer for the evening - Bobby Hayler. Quite a few people left saying how much they had enjoyed it, and several people not yet members said they might well now join - so thank you to you all - and hope to see you at one of our events in the future!

