

SPRING CAMP 2010

Due to popular demand we ran a Spring camp as well this year for the first time. Last weekend saw the event go off fantastically! 34 riders descended on Norton Heath on Friday, and were soon busy bedding down horses, sorting out who was parked where and who was with who. Then it was down to the important business of food and drink! Throughout the weekend, Tonie Finch and her team at Norton Heath did a fantastic job. The food was great, everyone was happy and helpful and it all made the weekend fun and relaxing for the riders. The sun shone and we all sat outside for a Pimms and BBQ, then riders got into their teams to play some games, which resulted in much hilarity and the discovery of a very fine cocktail mixer. All those taking part also wrote on post-it notes, their aims for the weekend - and we had them stuck in the bar, starting on the 'to do' side, and aiming to have them on the 'done' side by Sunday afternoon. I am pleased to report that the three post-its saying "don't fall off" all made it across to the other side, as did some rather more ambitious ones such as "get more than 65%", "Ride in my first medium" and "party like we did at the Inter Regionals!!"

Saturday morning saw everyone up bright and early for lessons with the three trainers - Paul Hayler, Mark Ruddock and Julie Hugo - and workshops on nutrition and veterinary. The nutrition workshop covered food labelling, myths about sports drinks, how much carbohydrate and protein you should eat in a day, and how much you should drink when exercising (water that is!) People were shocked to find how much salt was in some products that they thought were really healthy, and likewise where sugar is added to certain things to compensate for other stuff taken out! It was interesting to see how many riders were drinking water and eating bananas and fruit in the afternoon - all keen and sportsmanlike - sadly by about 9pm that evening, it all went rather downhill!!! Ralph did another great talk about all things horse related, and riders came away from his workshop with more knowledge and having had various questions answered too. Lessons over and it was onto the test riding - with all levels from Prelim to Inter I being ridden. After evening stables and another delicious meal, Mark and Paul did a demo to music. The sun shone again as we all gathered outside to watch Paul on three different horses at different levels. Mark explained how to put a floor pattern together, and find music to suit a particular horse, then Paul rode through the tests. Louise Clark and Pino also put on a great performance, riding their Advanced Medium Freestyle test. Then it was back to the bar for a great evening of chat and laughter.

Sunday saw campers looking a little more weary, but Chris Cowan and his exercise balls soon had them awake! There was only one faller on Sunday - Rachel rolling off her ball, and ending up across the floor with the ball on top of her - but she didn't try and repeat it on Speedy, so all was well!

The afternoon was a competition, and all riders looked very smart with full show gear and plaited horses - and it was great to see the improvement over the weekend. Nearly all got better marks today and rode a more accurate test. Riders also took the opportunity to sit in with the judges, write for them, and discuss marks and movements. The weekend finished with prizes in the bar to class winners - Penny Judd, Louise Gladding, Jessica Williams, Judi Davies and Mary Ellen Jackson. A couple of special

mentions for the weekend: Well done to Helen Murphy who rode all weekend and joined in enthusiastically, despite being pregnant with twins! (Julie said it was the first time she had ever taught three people on a horse at once!) Well done also to Louise G, who after her lesson and test riding on Sunday, nipped up the road to Berwick Farm, and won a ODE there too!

Thanks again, to everyone who came along and made camp such a success - to Norton Heath for making us so welcome, to Mark, Paul and Julie for being such enthusiastic trainers and to everyone who said afterwards what a great time they had had and sent their thanks.