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BRITISH DRESSAGE NORTH WEST REGION BYRDS

YOUR POINTS OF CONTACT ARE:

NW Regional Development Officer: Elaine Gray (details above)

NW Region BYRDS Representative: Moira Lafferty
Email: moira.lafferty@o2.co.uk / **Mob:** 07808 924695

Additional Regional Points of Contact

Isle of Man Angela Kennedy – 07624491911/angela@manx.net

Worcestershire: Geoff Simpson – 01299 266017 / orlandox@btinternet.com

BYRDS in the North West

The British Young Riders' Dressage Scheme was re launched in 2002. Aspiring young riders from 8 to 25 years of age are welcome to join the scheme and work their way through the levels and squadding processes. On the way we will offer top quality training, team experiences and exposure to opportunities only available through British Dressage.

FLEDGLINGS – (8 -11 year olds)

Riders from the beginning of the year of their 8th birthday to the end of the year of their 11th birthday.

PONY RIDERS - (12 – 16 year olds)

Ponies must be under 14.2hh (148cms) and over five years of age. The age for pony riders is taken from the beginning of the year of their 12th birthday to the end of the year of their 16th birthday.

JUNIOR RIDERS – (14 – 18 year olds)

May ride either a pony under 14.2hh or a horse until the end of the year of their 16th birthday. From 16 years all Junior's must ride horses. All horses and ponies must be five years of age or older. Juniors are from the beginning of the year of their 14th birthday to the end of the year of their 18th birthday.

YOUNG RIDERS – (16 – 25 year olds)

Must ride a horse which must be five years of age or older. Age is taken from the beginning of the year in which the rider is 16 until the end of the year in which they are 25.

SQUADDING in the North West

The Squads

Basically the squads are a framework for progress within the BYRDS structure. This is to encourage riders to develop and improve as riders and horsemen. BD is also starting to introduce a proficiency test that involves both riding and horsemanship: many of our BYRDS riders no longer come through a Pony Club system and may also keep their horses at livery, but it is very important that they still develop some basic knowledge of horse care so they can safely look after their horses/ponies, especially when away at competitions. Eventually BD intends that riders may only start competing when they have successfully completed a proficiency test. We have numerous riders ready to take their proficiency test and we will be putting our first group through shortly.

How riders can be squadded

Riders are normally squadded using a combination of tuition/assessment with their BYRDS trainer/assessor and squad test riding. Using training as well as tests allows us to get a clearer picture of a rider's understanding, level of work, and the relationship they have with their horse/pony. Some regions also get their riders to gain a certain percentage in the relevant squad test before they move up to next level. The system is in place to help build the rider's confidence as well as understanding and ability – it isn't a good thing to try and rush through the levels. There are no time limits on a rider's progression through the system, nor any requirement that they must eventually be A squad riders.

The tests and how they are judged

The rider tests have been designed to show the assessor(s) how well a rider can influence their horse's way of going through a supple and correct seat, good preparation, and a good relationship with their horse. Although they may appear relatively simple, they are constructed in a way that requires a great deal of skill to be able to ride them fluently and easily. From a marking point of view the test is split into three clear sections:

The Seat. To bring the best out of their horse a rider must be balanced and supple. Their straightness, security, correctness of position and poise are also marked in this section.

Way of going. Although this mark is apparently for the horse it is the rider's job to influence it. There is no mark for paces, so the horse is not being judged. A well trained horse that is supple, works in a good forward rhythm to an elastic contact will get better marks than a super horse working in an incorrect way.

Movements and figures. This mark reflects the rider's ability to prepare effectively to enable a test to look easy and fluent. It is also for the accurate and correct positioning of all the movements. An ability to ride accurately is essential in the training of the horse, and is also an important discipline to enable both horse and rider to progress up the levels. The rider's relationship with their horse is reflected in all the three sections. A rider who comes in and presents a good test will be well prepared and must have been influencing their horse well in the weeks coming up to a competition. (It is very important to remember that just because a horse appears to go well does not mean it is an easy horse to ride!) To ride these tests well the riders must consider what is being judged. It may seem easy for a B rider to ride a left turn at H, a right turn at G, circle right at X and give and retake the inside rein, but to do all that in quick succession and keep the horse forward, supple, rhythmic, straight requires a very well coordinated, supple and thoughtful rider! Each test contains movements that are just as difficult for the relevant level as in this example, so it is fair to say that these are very challenging tests when they are ridden with all this in mind! It is also important to bear in mind that if you work hard at riding these tests well it will massively help with your normal tests.

Qualities a Trainer would look for at each level.

Below is a basic outline of the qualities a rider in each squad would demonstrate. It is obvious that some of these things could not be determined from watching a rider ride a test, which is why the training and ongoing assessment is so important. Riders may well not exactly fulfil the criteria that are laid out below. They may enter a squad when they are only beginning to fulfil them, and will probably move on when they are well established at that level.

Fledgling squad

Position: working towards a basically correct position, but may not be able to maintain it in all paces

Effectiveness: able to ride in a fair rhythm in walk trot and canter.

Feel: aware of when the pony is working happily forward and uses tactful aids.

Understanding: aware of rhythm and forwardness, and that bend should be in direction of movement.

Level: able to ride simple school movements with some degree of accuracy and working towards riding without stirrups in the easier paces.

C Squad

Position: working towards a basically correct position, aware of any major issue and with assistance is able to work on improving these. Able to follow the horse's movement in the more comfortable paces.

Effectiveness: a rider who is able to maintain a fair rhythm in all three paces, and can influence bend to a good degree, and is aware of contact and issues that may need working on.

Feel: a rider who is aware of the harmony they are aiming for and achieves it at times, and tries to deal with problems.

Understanding: is aware of the scales of training, especially rhythm, suppleness and contact. Is able to improve their own riding and maintain horse's way of going with supervision.

Level: a rider who would be able to ride a prelim or novice test with understanding of preparation and can ride without stirrups in walk, trot and canter.

B squad

Position: a basically correct position showing some depth and security and a rider who is for the most part able to remain soft and supple.

Effectiveness: an effective rider who is able to influence positively their horse's way of going, but may need help to improve it.

Feel: a sympathetic rider who has harmony with the horse, and is aware of any problems and deals with them in a good way.

Understanding: has an understanding of a good way of going, and the scales of training. Is able to work under supervision to improve their horse and can exercise it well without supervision.

Level: a rider who has some understanding of lengthening and shortening the stride and basic lateral work and can ride confidently and effectively in all three paces without stirrups.

A squad

Position: a correct position with depth and security. A soft supple rider who is able to follow the horse's movement with ease.

Effectiveness: an effective rider who is able to positively influence their horse in its way of going and improve it.

Feel: a rider who shows very good harmony with an awareness of their horse in all their riding.

Understanding: has clear understanding of a good way of going, and scales of training and can apply it theoretically and in practice. Is able to work under supervision and alone to improve their horse and themselves.

Level: A rider who can include some more advanced work in their training and understands what this brings to them and their horse.

A * Squad

Riders in the A* Squad have their union jack pocket badge and / or have attended national squad training.

BYRDS TRAINERS in the North West

The trainers used throughout the North West Region are approved and accredited by British Dressage. They are all members of the British Dressage Register of Trainers and all have their own insurance (although clinics organised and advertised via the British Dressage magazine or website are covered by the British Dressage insurance). All trainers have up to date first aid certificates and have attended child protection workshops.

Many of them have successful competition records while others have made a name for themselves as trainers. They are carefully chosen by the BYRDS Representative and the RDO to ensure that they are the right trainer for the clinic and people attending. If you would like to know more about the trainers please contact Elaine. We would also welcome any feedback after the lesson on the trainers, facilities or organisation.

CLINICS in the North West

Training days/clinics are organised in all parts of the region throughout the year by the RDO. The current cost of a 45 minute training session is £30 at the Cheshire venue. You may also book shared lessons, these are available at £18 each for 45 minutes.

Anyone interested in BYRDS North West can take part in the clinics and you are welcome to come along and watch. We encourage you to become a member of British Dressage (if only as a training member) so that you may enjoy the many benefits of membership including receiving a copy of the magazine giving full date listings and reports of activities and includes some useful training articles. Full membership details can be obtained either from the British Dressage web site at www.britishdressage.co.uk or by contacting the Membership Officer at Head Office.

TRAINING CAMPS in the North West

Three two-day training camps are held each year at Somerford Park in Cheshire; a great venue with superb facilities. The camps give young riders the opportunity to receive training from our recognised BYRDS regional trainers, to develop test riding skills and in the evening participate in a sports psychology/team building event where you can get to know the other BYRDS NW members.

The current cost of camp is £140 and includes two semi private lessons, one individual test riding session which is videoed, a video feedback session with the judge, a talk from a guest speaker, a team building session with Dr Moira Lafferty (sports psychologist), two nights stabling & two bales of shavings.

If you would like to attend, please check availability with Elaine. A place will be reserved on receipt of a camp application form and payment.

The camps are open to riders aged 8 – 25. However, consideration will be given to children under 8 if space permits. Please contact Elaine to discuss.

BYRDS SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY COURSE in the North West

A 12-session sports psychology workshop series is run each year from October to March for riders over 14 years of age. The workshops include sessions on combating nervousness, acquiring confidence and techniques for riding the perfect dressage test. For more information or details of when the next course will commence contact Moira.

KEEPING A RECORD – PROGRESS CHARTS

This is a really useful thing to do! It enables you to keep track of your competition record and tell us what you have achieved. If you wish to be considered for team selection you must complete a progress chart and send it to Elaine. These charts are available to download from the NW Regional page of the British Dressage website. To be considered for Home International, Necarne, Wicklow or Sheepgate team selection you need to attend three training sessions in a year (camp counts as two) and be achieving 64% at the relevant level in affiliated competitions.

TEAMS in the North West

Every year there are a number of opportunities for you to be part of a team and to represent the region and or England, these include:

- **Necarne Castle Dressage Festival, N Ireland**
- **Marlton U21 Dressage Champs, Wicklow, S Ireland**
- **BYRDS Inter-Regional Competition, The College, Beds**
- **BYRDS Home International**
- **Sheepgate BYRDS U25's Champs , Lincolnshire**

We also run our own annual Regional Dressage Competition. This is not only an opportunity for you all to meet and compete against each other, but it is used as a selection trial for riders who wish to be considered for the Regional team. It's a great event and is good fun, keep an eye out for it in the schedule of events and come and join us. We always need volunteers and helpers to enable these events to be successful. Please, if you feel you can help, let Elaine know!

BYRDS VIDEO/DVD LIBRARY

Thanks to the continuous fund raising efforts of our BYRDS volunteers, BYRDS members have access to a DVD/Video library which has an extensive range of titles. If you would like to use the library please email Elaine for the catalogue which also contains information on the borrowing rules.

BYRDS NORTH WEST CLOTHING

BYRDS North West clothing can be purchased from Jane Whitney. Jane can be contacted on 01606 554448 or 07970 582235.

FUNDRAISING

One of the reasons we have become such a successful region is due to the continuous training opportunities we provide. This is made possible thanks to the funds raised by our NW BYRDS Team and all of the volunteers who man the catering and donate food and cakes for the Camps and Regional Championships. More help is always appreciated – please contact Elaine if you can offer support.

KEEPING UP TO DATE of activity in the North West Region

BYRDS newsletters are emailed to NW BYRDS members three times a year to keep you up to date with our activities. If you are not a member but would like to receive these updates you can either download them from the NW Regional page of the British Dressage web site or alternatively join our email listings by sending your email details to Elaine Gray. If you do not have access to the website or an email address you can send an A5 stamp addressed envelope (with correct postage please!) to Elaine Gray who will ensure that a copy of each newsletter is sent to you.

FINALLY

If you would like more information or have any questions please feel free to contact any of the people on the front page of this document. The form attached is for you to register your

interest and to join our database, that way we know you are out there and can contact you in the future. Please take a minute to complete the form and return it back to Elaine.

We hope very much you will decide to join in our BYRDS activities and that you will enjoy and learn from the experiences we offer. If you have any ideas or suggestions please discuss them with Elaine or Moira in order that we can continue to improve and develop the BYRDS scheme within the region.

BYRDS NORTH WEST REGION REGISTRATION FORM

If you would like to join NW Region BYRDS. Please complete this page and return via email to Elaine Gray - elainegray@britishdressage.co.uk

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Telephone No: _____

Mobile No: _____

Email: _____

Name of Parent/ Guardian: _____

BD Membership No: (if applicable) _____

Squad Level: _____

Current Level Competing: _____

Details of horse/pony: _____

Name of Trainer: _____

Other relevant Experience: _____
