

Newsletter: Winter 2017

WELCOME TO ALL NEW MEMBERS!

Time to reflect

What sort of horsey year have you had? Have you achieved more than you thought? Have you done things you never thought you'd do? What firsts did you do? What lasts did you decide on? Perhaps it's been tougher than normal? Perhaps you've felt more challenged? with more nerves? more injuries?! Whatever year you have had, I hope that at some points along the way, you have you had FUN!

I'm learning that owning a horse is a total rollercoaster. My horsey highs this year include beach-rides, some highest ever scores, moving up to Elementary and riding at the BD Winter Dressage champs and photo bombing Charlotte Dujardin in the warm-up. My lows include being sick in Tolkien's feed bucket because of my nerves at the same event and managing my back pain which can make riding well very hard. I feel lucky that these lows are really not that bad. There are other lows in life of course that can affect how you feel about your horse world too, and it's always a tricky balance isn't it to separate things out and to try not to let other things get on top of you, to keep the focus, the belief and to do more of the things that bring you joy and less of the things which don't. I must try and listen more to my own advice! I hope your horsey year has been a good one, and if it's been a tough one, then hang on in there, I'm sure next year will be better.

Pippa Griffin



In memory of Brenda Bree - a close friend of many members who has sadly lost her battle with her breathing problems. Brenda was an amazing, brave woman who simply refused to believe she couldn't keep going. She would go on a hack and say "my pockets aren't big enough for both my phone and my inhaler" and off she'd go, with just one or other in her pocket - fearless as anything. x

In this newsletter...

- This Girl Can!
- SJ at Crofton
- Survey results
- Summary dates
- Christmas shindig

‘THIS GIRL CAN’: British Eventing & The Sports Council by Margaret Hird

So this Old Bat Did!! A leaflet fell out the May edition of the British Horse Society magazine which I nearly binned, until I saw “Four days of BE training for £95”. I was sure this was a misprint but keyed in the online link advertised, to be greeted by an application of almost 30 questions to fill in. The only criteria, was to be a woman over the age of 26, who wanted to event.

You may recall that after the Rio Olympics, there was extensive advertising on the TV by the Sports Council for ‘This Girl Can’ to get more women into active sports. So after an hour of completing the application, mostly straightforward but some cryptic questions such as why should you be accepted, what would you expect to get out of the course plus what would you take away with you, I pressed ‘send’ and thought that was a complete waste of time as I wouldn’t be considered, being aged 61. Also I hadn’t completed a CV for a job application since 1983!

Lo and behold, a week later I was sent a congratulatory email saying I had been successful and please confirm acceptance. So still being sceptical about the bargain training cost, I telephoned the organiser to be told on hearing my name, “Your application jumped out and the selection committee were very impressed” What a shock! And yes, that was the training cost as the rest was funded jointly by British Eventing and the Sports Council of £17K for 40 ladies out of literally 100s of applications. Training was once a month from May to August, at Tweseldown.

The first day was in all three disciplines, which was the format for the remaining days, in groups of four. I fast realised that we were being assessed on our riding ability and the stage of our horse’s training. In the flatwork, the instructor, a full BHSI, asked me “Who is this smart horse?” to which I replied “A Welsh Cob” and she barked back “I know it’s a Welsh Cob!” Luckily, after that acrimonious start, Princess went beautifully. After lunch in the vehicle park, where other ladies were soon chatting, we went onto SJ and then finished out on the XC. I only jumped one round in the SJ as the ground was so hard and luckily Princess jumped a nice clear, followed up by superb jumping on the XC, clear over everything asked. So with all the instructors saying we were a “true partnership” and “the ultimate event horse” I went home a very happy bunny, delighted with my beloved Princess.

For the second day, I was so surprised to be in the top group with two enormous event horses, over 17hh as Princess is only 15.1hh. We started with a great flatwork session over poles, which seems to be the new in-thing, to be followed by lunch and SJ and again finishing on XC but with the instructors rotated from the first day’s training. In the July session, I arrived just as Georgina Marks was finishing with her first group of Meonites. We were all able to have a quick chat in the vehicle park as they were all surprised to see me there. It did feel strange leaving them as I knew everyone so well.

‘THIS GIRL CAN’: British Eventing & The Sports Council

The final day in the XC session, we concentrated on timing. We had to ride two sections, the first being quite fast in open country whilst the second was over more concentrated complexes of jumps, so focusing on the ability to ride these correctly with no run outs, against a set time. We were each fitted with a stopwatch, which we were supposed to monitor as we did the two sections. It is all I can do to concentrate on the jumps so I didn't bother! Luckily my internal clock is pretty good and the first section I was the only one bang on time. I was 20 secs too fast in the second which bucked the trend as the others were well over time. However Princess is very good through trappy sections as she is an economical jumper and easy to bounce in combinations. The instructor had his own stopwatch so knew exactly how we performed. So I found that session the best of the XC as he had some useful tips regarding walking the course in relation to effective time management.

The four days consolidated what I had learnt in recent years of ODE, not only from previous experience but lots of useful tips over the three disciplines, a lot to do with time management from leaving home, walking the courses to finishing the day with a sound horse. I asked if the same event would be run again in 2018 which is yes but without all the funding. So I was very lucky to have been selected as four days training with top class instructors, in small groups, would be very expensive.

So what else did I learn?

1. Don't throw away junk mail – there might be a surprise opportunity
2. Great things come in small packages (Princess)
3. Handsome is as handsome does (Princess)
4. Don't feel daunted by the unknown - you can only do your best. By the time you get to my age you don't care anyway!
5. Enjoy the opportunity given to you. The clock is ticking for me as a rider which I put in my application. So seize the day!

Most of all, I wouldn't have got the chance if it hadn't been for all the training I have attended with Princess, who was just broken in by me, when I first started with Meon. So fellow members, please attend the training clinics provided at very reasonable cost. We have a great set of instructors who really know their stuff!! We are lucky to have such a friendly and hard working Committee, who organise all the training and events, put on by the Club. So an enormous Thank You from Princess and myself. *Margaret Hird*

MEON COMPETITIONS: SJ at Crofton, Saturday 18th November



Corinne Staples



Diane Williams



Laura Newnham

MEON COMPETITIONS: SJ at Crofton, Saturday 18th November

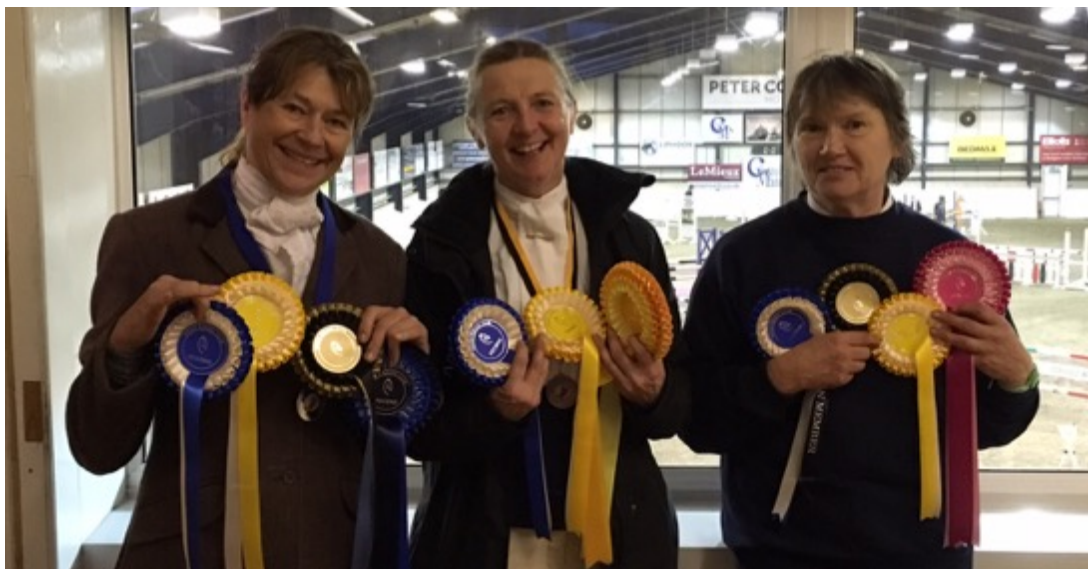
Gingernuts and Glamour Girls

The Autumn Meon Show jumping held at Crofton has become so successful that entries for all classes were full a month before the closing date, with no late entries being accepted. This is due to the superb organisation by Penny Briggs and her band of merry helpers on the day. Lots of comments from competitors and visitors on how helpful and friendly all the stewards were and how well run the day was.

Ruth Evans with The Ritz, Shirley Medgett with Harry and myself (*pic below*) with Princess had been a team of three in 2016. So this year we welcomed Corrine Staples with her lovely mare, Gemstone. As all our horses were chestnuts, we were the Meon Gingernuts, for the 85cm class. Two superb clear rounds from Ruth and Shirley, an unlucky 4 faults from myself and a respectable 8 faults from Corrine, enabled the Team to achieve a well-deserved 2nd place. Ruth, Shirley and myself gained 2nd, Best Member, 3rd and 6th, respectively, in Section B, as individuals.

In the 90cms class we welcomed Liz English with her attractive bay mare, Bridget. So we resumed our 2016 ironic team name of the Meon Glamour Girls as we are all ladies of a certain age! Again a superb clear from Shirley, an unlucky 4 faults from Ruth with Liz, who not only went first for our team, but was the trail blazer for the whole competition, earning a decent 8 faults over a very demanding but fair course, I was so pleased with a lovely clear from Princess.

After a very long wait in the restaurant, as we had been the first team to compete, we were delighted to discover the team came 3rd with myself 10th and Best Member and Shirley 11th. The rosettes and medals were absolutely gorgeous, with a haul of 8 team rosettes, 3 individual rosettes, two medals and two Best Members rosettes. What pot hunters we sound!! However we flew the flag for Meon RC!



MEON COMPETITIONS: SJ at Crofton, Saturday 18th November

Team Soda and Daniel's Crew...

There were other teams from Meon, notably Team Soda comprising of Diane Williams, Adele Shaw, Ony Rodgers and Sharon Veal who did very well in the 75 class, on their ever reliable steeds. Daniel's Crew in the last two classes of the day comprising Daniel Searle, Laura Newnham, Helen Vernon and Kimm Bakker. The jumps were enormous so very well done to them! Congratulations to all the people above, on their various winning rosettes!



Helen Vernon

Most importantly, the whole day was very enjoyable, enhanced with the spirit which was reflected in the number of teams entered in all classes. The weather was reasonable, and there was full on jumping action from early morning until early evening, over six classes ranging from 70cms to 105cms. So a class for everyone!

Many thanks to Penny Briggs and I have to say, Kath Havering on the Secretary's desk for her immense patience in dealing with all the riders queries, etc. To all the helpers who were stewards wearing the smart Meon Steward tabards, who enabled the day to run so smoothly. Appreciation is extended to Jenny Naylor-Davies, accredited BSJA course designer, for her excellent thought-provoking courses and to Sharon Thayer who, as ever, took superb photos of all the competitors' show jumping. Lots to choose from so a photo for everyone! Roll on next year's event! *Margaret Hird*

OUR SURVEY SAID...

So at our AGM and in the Autumn newsletter, we gave / sent out a survey just to get the vibe of where you're at, why you join us, what you take part in (or not) and why. Here are the headlines of what you said...

45 responses (out of over 100 members)

Most of you visit our **website**, **Facebook** page and **Newsletter regularly**, only a couple of you **rarely** (if no internet access), and a few of you are **addicted!**

4.8 out of 5

for our dressage, SJ and XC training

“Best offered of all clubs locally”
“Only one pole class, but excellent”

A few people noted they would like “**weekend or evening offerings**”. However, we have found that *when we have run weekend training, the take-up has been low. What to do?*

£50 the maximum anyone was willing to pay for a high-profile trainer. Most people said £20-£40 if a shared session and it was noted that it depended on which discipline and some people not interested in this at all. *We reckon we'd have to spend more than £40 for a high-profile dressage trainer. A recent SJ clinic run elsewhere at £25 each with a high-profile trainer did not fill all the spaces. So this is a tricky one!*

Some people hadn't been to training yet – go on give it a go in 2018!

OUR SURVEY SAID...

Too many of you said “Not yet” to volunteering to be on a team, or “Lacking experience”

We really want to comment on this. We want to give **as many people as possible** the opportunity to be on a team. Please please please **don't ever** think you are not good enough, or be too scared to raise a hand, or be worried about 'letting the team down' – **our teams don't work like that**. We have worked hard enough to have some funds in the pot, which enables us to put forward **as many teams as we want and reasonably can**. Yes, we might ask you how you're getting on in your recent experiences, but it's not a 'test' – it's just to see how we can best make up the teams. **I had never done a dressage competition in my life before I joined Meon (PG ed)**. Please put yourself forward, let's **swamp the comps** with Meonites in 2018!

Lots of you said you already **help out at competitions** – **THANK YOU** – we cannot make great events happen without you. If you haven't had the opportunity to do so, please **jump in**. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, make new friends, find out how things work and give something back – **we need you!**

You describe us as:

Friendly
Supportive
Confidence-building
Like-minded
Lovely people
Motivational
Fun
Sociable
Good friends
Community
Horse-network
Excellent value for money
Well-run
Informative

You had some other event requests:

Hunter Trial *yes we've had a pause on this one as it needs 70+ volunteers but that's not a never again!*
Endurance *we did try this one season, but no-one signed up!*
Combined Training *(noted)*
Arena Eventing *(noted)*

Most people were up for most of our ideas for events. We have noted the comments about our **3-day camp** and we are looking at alternative venues next year. You would like more **social events** and **fun rides**. Stand by for our **50th anniversary news** in next year's newsletter!

**THANK YOU EVERYONE WHO TOOK TIME
TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY!**

FUTURE DATES: All dates on the Calendar page of our website, but here's the summary:

	Competition	Venue	Organiser
2017			
Sat 18 November	Meon RC Showjumping	Crofton	Penny Briggs
2018			
Sun 18 Feb	Novice and Intermediate Winter Show Jumping Qualifiers	Crofton	Meon RC
Sat 24 Mar	Winter Intermediate Dressage Qualifier	Crofton	Solent RC
Fri 30 Mar	FOTH Combined Training Qualifier	Crofton	Chilworth RC
Sat 14 – Sun 15 April	Winter Novice Champs, Grantham, Lincs	Arena UK	BRC HQ
Sun 22 April	Festival of the Horse Challenge Qualifier	Larkhill	Bourne Valley
Fri 27 – Sun 29 April	Winter Intermediate Champs	Bury Farm	BRC HQ
Sat 19 – Sun 20 May	Festival of the Horse Challenge and Combined Training Champs	Aston Le Walls	BRC HQ
Sun 17 June	Horse Trials Qualifier	Moreton EC	Moreton/ Area 17
Sun 23 June	Dressage to Music Qualifier	Crofton	Chilworth
Sun 1 July	Show Jumping and Style Qualifier	Moreton EC	Shillingstone RC
Sun 15 July	Summer Dressage and Riding Test Qualifier	Hurn	NFRC/East Dorset
Fri 3- Sun 5 August	Horse Trials Champs	Swalcliffe Park EC	BRC HQ
Sat 1 – Sun 2 Sept	National Championships.(Dressage, Riding Test, SJ, SJ Style)	Lincoln Showground	BRC HQ
Fri 28-Sun 30 Sept TBC	Dressage to Music Championships	Bury Farm	BRC HQ

We have been making some updates to our website and will continue to do so in the New Year – including updating 'stock' photography and replacing it with more of our own photographs. If I spot a good pic on Facebook, I'll probably drop you a note asking if we could use a high-res version of it on our website, and you can say yes / no and we can check with any photographers involved too. Thank you for your patience!

And finally, a few pics from Christmas drinks at The George and Falcon...

**WISHING YOU ALL A FAB FESTIVE BREAK AND
BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR**



Penny, Jan, Diane



Georgina



Elsbeth, Helen, Gen



Jenny, Debbie, Corinne



Pippa and Nicole

NEXT TIME...

Meon RC is 50 years old in 2018 – find out what's in store for a year packed with ideas and events!

Thank you everyone who has written things for this newsletter!