

LCRC NEWS

FREE NEWSLETTER FOR LAMBERT'S CASTLE RIDING CLUB MEMBERS



Malcolm entertains

MEMBERS enjoyed another good supper followed by an interesting and informative talk from previous British Equestrian Federation (BEF) chair Malcolm Wharton at The Ridgeway in February.

Malcolm was chair of the BEF for five years and he explained the way the BEF is funded and works, and how it prepared for the Tokyo and Paris Olympics, where the British teams had great success.

News goes digital

IN the club's efforts to be more environmentally friendly, and to save on postage costs, this quarterly newsletter will now be sent digitally via email.

If you would prefer to still receive a printed copy through the post, please send treasurer Fran Summers an email to confirm this.

My mission with music

THE moment I found out that you could compete at freestyle from prelim level was the first step of my dressage to music journey. And it's all thanks to Lambert's Castle Riding Club.

I had always been impressed watching the pros on TV... there's just something about music that adds an extra layer of emotion to anything. So, when LCRC organised a dressage to music talk a few years back, I had a front row seat.

Mel Northwood hosted an inspiring evening explaining how freestyle works – which is surprisingly different to 'normal' dressage. She showed us an impressive film of her riding her gorgeous gelding, Barney, to such a fun and uplifting Disney medley which included Bear

Necessities and I was hooked.

Creating the entire show for yourself can seem daunting but, broken down into manageable pieces, it is very exciting.

Mel talked about different music options which need to fit your horse and its way of going. She uses professional company Equidance for her music, the team behind which kindly donated a wrist speaker as a raffle prize and I was lucky enough to win it. As if I wasn't already keen enough!

The next step – the floorplan – seemed to take me a long time for various reasons. Like usual dressage, each level has specific movements that must be completed in your test. However, the beauty is that, as long as you have included them all, your test (floorplan) can be designed exactly how you like. It also



Image: Rob Bayes Photography



means the judges don't necessarily know when you go wrong!

I had a few lessons with Mel who created a novice floorplan which showed off my mare April's best moves... and tucked the not-so-great ones up at A! Once you have your floorplan, it is on to choosing the music. You can do it yourself but that was way too complicated for my liking so I went to Equidance and, although it may seem a touch expensive, they absolutely smashed it for me. It's also worth bearing in mind that you will be riding to this one piece of music for a long time... until you want to go up a level.

We filmed my floorplan and sent it off to Equidance. I then sent a list of songs I liked (it was very long and eclectic) and received a phone call from Kelly Jewell – aka Mrs Equidance and one half of the very friendly team – to discuss my choices and what would work.

Then the magic happens.

The other half of the Equidance team – Tony Hobden, who put together the music for Becky Moody at the Paris Olympics no less – then casts a spell over your songs and lay it over the video of your floorplan and send it back to you so you can watch yourself ride it to your very own music! This is also a brilliant tool to refer to for those who don't have a 60x20m school to practice in.

Next is the boring stuff. You need a music licence to play it in public, but that is, thankfully, not as scary as it sounds. To compete at freestyle, you have to be a member of British Dressage, however, you can join as a club member to start with which costs around £50 for the year. And they sort out the licence and 'special stickers' to put on the CDs that Equidance sends you.

Then, in this order – you cry at your wonderful music, practice it before your first event, then cry again when you ride it for the first time at a competition.

It honestly is the best feeling. It brings a layer of joy and a sprinkling of pizzazz that 'normal' dressage lacks.

I've had my music for almost a year now and I love it every time I ride it.

I went with Meghan Trainor's Made You Look for the trot work and an instrumental saxophone version of Dance Monkey for canter.

A few weeks ago, I won my class at Chard with a personal best score of 73.06 per cent plus a qualification for the Petplan Area Festival in August.

I am honestly having a ball with the freestyle and I urge anyone who thinks they might be keen to give it a go – you won't be disappointed.

Freestyle dressage: what do I have to do?

- Listen to an array of music – different genres. Maybe play whilst you lunge your horse to get a feel for what might fit. Then make a list of what you like. Put everything down because not every song will suit your horse.
- Find a trainer to help you with a floorplan. Melissa Northwood was brilliant for me. She competes freestyle herself so has a wealth of experience and knowhow.
- When you're ready, get your instructor to film your floorplan. Then, if using a company, send it off.
- Discuss your songs and choose what you're going to use.
- Join BD (if you haven't already) and fill in forms for licence. This is not scary.
- Receive your music and cry with joy.
- Practice, then just do it!

DIARY DATES

Saturday 26 April

XC schooling with Millie Vickery

Cricket St Thomas XC Course, Chard 11:30am-2:30pm

Members-only training. Saturday XC schooling at Cricket St Thomas with BHS coach Millie Vickery (Tonks). Millie has competed at 5-star level eventing, medium level BD and BS up to foxhunter and brings a wealth of experience from the wider equine world. She has been coaching for over 30 years and is particularly great at coaching rider balance, position, and alignment. Cricket St Thomas XC course offers a huge degree of flexibility on the course and it's easy to string together a number of fences in one area, so less time is spent travelling to different areas. There is everything from small logs on the ground to fences around 1m. The vast majority of the fences are below 90cm though. Groups of three, £42 per person – which includes a riding club discount for the course hire. Please let Gilly know what height range you are comfortable jumping when booking so she can group together as best as possible. All bookings for this clinic to Gilly Brugge: gillybrugge@gmail.com

Thursday 1 May

Cavalletti clinic with Melissa Northwood

Chard Equestrian, Chard, Somerset 12noon-2pm

Cavalletti (raised pole) exercises with Mel Northwood at Chard Equestrian. Group hour sessions of 3 to 4 £25 per person (LCRC) £27.50 (Area 12). Please book directly with Rachel Collins (hello@rachelcollinsphotography.co.uk)

Monday 2 June

Club ride

Beaminster Down 10:30am-2pm. Please note the date for this ride may change due to silage and weather. Horn Park Farm, Beaminster DT8 3PT. Following the success of last year's ride, Bonnie and Charlie Grant Ives have kindly agreed to host a club ride for us again. The ride will be across private farmland and bridleways with limited road work. This ride will be at a moderate pace with some opportunities to canter in open spaces. £5 payment by Bacs or correct cash on the day. Names to Fran by Thursday 29/5 (fran.summers60@gmail.com).

Thursday 19 June

Members evening dressage competition

SAVE THE DATE: 4pm-8:30pm. Full details to follow. Enjoy a late afternoon/evening unaffiliated dressage competition for members only. Three or four classes from intro to novice all in a 20m x 40m arena. The perfect way to compete (no competition dress or pesky plaits are necessary) and then enjoy some downtime together afterwards with a sociable 'bring a plate' gathering. Costs, Location, Classes etc will follow nearer to the time.

DIARY DATES

Wednesday 25 June

Club ride

Frampton – Southover, Frampton Dorset DT2 9NQ 10:30am-2pm. By kind permission of Liz and Michael Elliott. Enjoy the old turf bridleways of Dorset, nearly all off-road at a moderate to fast pace with opportunity to canter in open fields. Liz has kindly offered parking and to lead this popular ride again. £5 payment by Bacs or correct cash on the day. Names to Fran by Sunday 22nd June (fran.summers60@gmail.com).

Tuesday 15 July

Club evening ride

Evening ride and supper 5pm-9pm

Beckford Bridge (Dalwood – What3words – wider.foresight.immediate)

Led by Fiona Benger, this ride around the quiet rural lanes and bridleways will be at a slow to moderate pace and ideal for first-timers, to include a supper stop at the Tuckers Arms, Dalwood, £15 each (tbc) to include supper. Names to Fran by Thursday 10 July (fran.summers60@gmail.com).

Dates are subject to change at the discretion of the club.

**PLEASE KEEP AN EYE ON OUR WEBSITE OR FACEBOOK
PAGE AS TRAINING IS FREQUENTLY UPDATED**

Cancellations for training within 24 hours (without a vet certificate) will remain chargeable.