

## **Hartpury Senior Winter Dressage Championship Report - 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2011**

It had been five months since our Senior Team qualified at Doncaster for the Winter Dressage Championships and over that length of time some changes to horses and riders are inevitable. We knew in the New Year that Jane Carruthers would not be able to take her team place and started to watch form at the Dressage Shows held in January and February at Brooksby. Finally Julie Preston and Glidawn Eddie were chosen to ride N24 in the team, alongside Anna Barradell with Elektra VII, Joe Davey with Oscar Award and Julie Armstrong with Rosie. As the entries closed at the beginning of March we were able to include seven more riders and horses names, in case we needed a reserve.

Preparations were in great swing. Jane Peberdy had seen everyone at Blaby Mill in her open sessions and we had a final 'team only' test riding session with her at New York Farm on 26<sup>th</sup> March. Things were just great: Anna had buried her ghosts from Vale View; Julie's Eddie had got over his sore foot and if you were going to forget your test, then this was the time to do so (and we did!). We were all ready to go, until 5pm on 1<sup>st</sup> April ..... The message that Oscar was hopping lame was no April fool, by the time I saw him he would not even trot up! Julie Preston and I had already been formulating her contingency plans throughout the day because her daughter had been admitted to hospital and worst case was Julie may need to stay at home! A near frantic Friday teatime call to Jules Johnson to ride P18 in place of Oscar, was met with some bewilderment to say the least. Further calls revealed that Julie Preston was free to ride, her daughter had been discharged and all was fine. Jules called and yes, she was about to start washing Haf's mane and tail and would be at Hartpury by 9am the following morning! Thank goodness for that reserve list.

After rain on the journey down, we had a day of glorious sunshine in the breath taking scenery around the Hartpury campus. Good luck text messages were arriving from members, Liz and Claire came wearing their new Rearsby Lodge jackets and sweatshirts, and Joe arrived to help his team mates warm-up. Jules kept her nerves under control, and Haf was such a good boy, he even charmed the judge with his gorgeous mane that she had to write about it on the score sheet! Anna and Elektra were next to go, they had enjoyed the overnight stay and benefitted from a leisurely morning, resulting in the calm, accurate test we all expect from this partnership. Julie Preston put her recent troubles behind her, and Eddie looked stunning in the sunshine as they put in a confident and foot perfect performance. Julie Armstrong and Rosie had hardly trotted half the long side before she was asked to start; luckily Rosie is unflappable and didn't need to look at the banners, they rode a superb test in which the judge favoured their canter work.

As we munched ice creams waiting for the scores, the riders collected a free bag of NAF minty treats for their horses and we filled in questionnaires to win more NAF products! This time our team was not lucky enough to be in the top ten who received rosettes. We had brilliant scores from 64%-66% but such is the standard of the championships, the winners were 69-70%. Our best performance came from the amazing Haf and Jules in 12<sup>th</sup> place, a lady who certainly 'went the extra mile' to help Rearsby Lodge field a full team.

I must also say a huge thank you to all the helpers/drivers who made it possible for Anna, Jules, Julie and Julie to be at Hartpury. The experience of riding in 'that arena' will stay with them for a long time, and, I hope, make them hungry to qualify again!

Annette Gibson

## **Hartpury Junior Winter Dressage Championship Report – 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2011**

Like the Senior Team the Juniors had also qualified at Doncaster for the Winter Dressage some five months ago. Polly Machin decided not to take up her spot in the team so Felicity Spencer and Starlight Express took the place.

Emma Beeson with Wyehay Paddington (her last ride as a junior) had an earlier start again and put in a good test. Ellis Nicholls on Solar Sun was next to go, they had warmed up beautifully and calm but when they went in the arena Solar Sun went lame. The judge got out the car but allowed Ellis to continue but had said she would be marked down. Ellis did really well and composed herself and rode the test very well and just got marked down in the trot.

Felicity Spencer and Starlight Express were on at lunchtime but unfortunately so was the rain. Poor Felicity had a soaking before she went in but still did a good test. Katie Pearson and Thomas was the last member of the team to go and while she was warming up had her spurs taken off her as were not the plastic round balls – they managed to use these at Area! Katie again did a good test even without her spurs.

The team were not in the top ten so unfortunately came away without rosettes but I think they all enjoyed themselves and want to have another go next year.

Thank you to all the Mums, Dads and helpers for making the journey and hope to see you all at Sheepgate in June.

Claire Atkins