



Hoofing Around



Spring 2022

**From your Chairman
Claire Knight**



Welcome everyone to our spring newsletter. I hope the weather starts to improve as the days get longer and that we can all enjoy many more hours riding and spending time with our horses.

Our wonderful show jumping instructor Kim Pitman sadly decided that she no longer wanted to continue with the club. We all as a Committee wish her the best of luck and thank her for her years of service to the club, she will be greatly missed.

In dressage news, East Mendip entered the Novice Winter Riding Club Championships held at Kings Sedgemoor Equestrian Centre. The team comprised of Ella Hooper and Debbie Pickford riding Prelim tests and Samantha Lander and Jodie Bennett riding Novice tests; they all got some fantastic percentages at this level and did us proud.

Still with dressage, EMRC have won the E-Riders Winter Riding Club League with a staggering 568 points, 235 points ahead of the Club who won the Summer League! Sue Hamblin won both the Intro and Prelim championships, Sandi Leach was Reserve Reserve Champion in the Intro and Samantha Lander was Reserve Champion in the Novice. Well done to everyone that took part. I hope that you have all enjoyed it as much as I have.

There are plenty of events for all disciplines planned over the summer and of course camp, so please check the website or Facebook page to see what is going on. All dates also included with this newsletter.

As always, we here at East Mendip celebrate every success of all of our members, so if you have any news to share, please contact our Facebook page so that we can give you a mention.

I hope you all enjoy the newsletter. Thank you to Alex and Jo Hobbs for putting it all together.

Stay safe everyone and see you all soon.

Claire and Gucci



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Training Clinics 2022

Dates of Summer Events have been shared via email.
Please have a look at these and book via the relevant organiser.



◆ FLU VACCINE

All horses must have had a flu vaccine within the last 12 months to attend clinics at Kingfisher please.

◆ HELPERS

If you do not wish to attend a clinic but are happy to help, please let the organiser know. We appreciate all help and, don't forget, our Rewards Scheme for money off! (See details below)

◆ REFRESHMENTS

The urn will be on for each clinic at Kingfisher. It is £1 per person, for as many drinks as you like (and normally there are some biscuits or cake too!!)

◆ T&C's

Times will be emailed out, please pay once you have received this email. Payment should be received 48 hours before the clinic date. Strictly no cash on the day or cheque payments. Please put your name and clinic date in the reference if you can, so we can trace transactions. If you cannot change the reference, please email debbiepickford@outlook.com to confirm payment has been made. Please remember to take away your mess and horse poo on the day and ensure the parking area is tidy when you leave.



◆ VOLUNTEER REWARD SCHEME

For every four hours of volunteering, you will receive a £5 credit. Each quarter, the volunteer spreadsheet will be reviewed and those who have accrued 4 hours will be offered their £5 credit. Debbie Pickford our Treasurer will contact you. The quarters are; Quarter 1 – January, February, March. Credits will be issued at the beginning of April. Quarter 2 – April, May, June. Credits will be issued at the beginning of July. Quarter 3 – July, August, September. Credits will be issued at the beginning of October. Quarter 4 – October, November, December. Credits will be issued at the beginning of January. Any hours under 4, and over 4 will be carried forward to the next quarter. Credits cannot be used in the quarter they are earned, they will be issued at the end of the quarter for use by the end of the membership year. The credit offered must be used in the same membership year. Unused credits will NOT be carried forward to the next membership year. The exception is if the credit is accrued in Quarter 4, October, November, December. This can be carried over, and is to be used before the end of March of the following membership year. To use the reward, email Debbie (debbiepickford@outlook.com) when you make your payment so she can update her records. The maximum rewards that can be earned throughout the year is £40. If the system becomes onerous or complicated, we reserve the right to amend it for next year.





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EMRC Camp 2022

Friday 23rd September - Sunday 25th September 2022
Stockland Lovell Equestrian Centre, TA5 1JJ
([What3Words //patching.broom.perky](https://www.what3words.com/patching.broom.perky))

Annual camp is always popular, and places are limited. Stockland Lovell offer fantastic facilities and this year we are offering you a couple of options.

Full camp – total cost £260 per person – Options of Jumping or Dressage Only

Friday Afternoon

A one hour session with Charlotte Wake – you can choose either Dressage or Show Jumping.

Friday Evening

Social Time

Saturday Morning

A one hour Dressage session for everyone

Saturday Afternoon

For Jumping Clinic - One and a half hours XC session with Naomi Carter

For Dressage Only - One hour Dressage

Saturday Evening

Camp Quiz and Bingo!

Sunday Morning

For Jumping Clinic – One hour Show Jumping

For Dressage Only – 45 minutes individual session with Ellie Maguire

Then lunch and presentation before.....home time

Hacking Camp – total cost £210 per person

Stockland Lovell has some great hacking around the venue which they are happy for campers to use. So, this year we are offering a Hacking Only Camp.

Non-Riding Camp - £150 per person

For those who do not wish to bring their horse or haven't done camp before and want to see what happens before committing next year, we are offer a non-riding camp. So, you can come and be part of the fun but no pressure to ride!

Terms and Conditions:

The prices quoted are inclusive of yours and your horse's accommodation, your food and your tuition (on the full camp) as well as all the fun! Last year we helped you by spreading the cost and are happy to do this again. The first payment of £100 will be needed by 30th April. The second of £80 by 30th June and the final payment by 31st August. To book please email claireknight878@hotmail.co.uk. Claire will keep you updated with everything related to camp including a reminder when payments are due.

- *Your horse needs to have been vaccinated within the previous 9 months to camp*
- *No fixed peak hats for Cross Country*
- *Body protectors must be worn for Cross Country – up to you for Show Jumping*
- *If you cancel, we can only refund your money if we can fill your place*





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EMRC Team Events



We have had a few members out competing, representing the club and doing us all proud!

Area 12 Team Show Jumping, Kings Sedgemoor Equestrian Centre, 20th November 2021



70cm Team - Chelsea and Honey, Karen and Pippin, Debbie and Bandit, Sue and Archie

80cm Team - Chelsea and Honey, Sarah and Claude, Linda and AJ, Debbie and Bandit

Team Show Jumping, Dorset Show Ground, 5th December 2021



80cm Team

Chelsea and Honey
Sarah and Claude
Linda and AJ



Team Arena Eventing, Kings Sedgemoor Equestrian Centre, 16th January 2022



60cm Team - Alex and Connie, Jo and Hattie, Sarah and Claude

70cm Red Team - Alex and Connie, Jo and Hattie, Jodie and Jack, Linda and AJ

70cm Blue Team - Chelsea and Honey, Sarah and Claude, Debbie and Bandit

Area 12 Novice Dressage Qualifiers, Kings Sedgemoor Equestrian Centre, 27th February 2022

Individual Intro - Ella and Leela, Sarah and Sam

Team Prelim - Debbie and Bandit, Ella and Leela

Team Novice - Samantha and Fred, Jodie and Jack





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**Team Arena Eventing, Kings Sedgemoor Equestrian Centre
16th January 2022 - Alex & Jo Hobbs**

We joined EMRC as it was a club that didn't put the pressure on members to compete. So when we got a message from Debbie asking us if we wanted to join the Arena Eventing 80cm Team, we knew we could say no!! Which we did, but followed by saying if she was looking for 60cm or 70cm members, then we may have thought about it!! She jumped on our offer to have a second 70cm team and before we knew it, we were signed up to represent the riding club at an event. Gulp! Fellow team members, Chelsea, Sarah D, Debbie, Linda and Jodie were able to answer all our questions; what to wear, what are the rules, how does it all work?!

Like most others, we work full time so we had little time to practice but on the positive, less time to panic about it! We have only been to KSEC once before, so went down the previous weekend to suss out the venue and have a look at their jumps. Chelsea and Sarah were competing there so they talked us through how it all worked which was helpful. Most people know our horses are more than capable of 70cm but we still have that confidence wobble so after seeing the jumps, we decided we wanted to go in the 60cm class before tackling the 70cm team event!! A quick message on the group chat and Sarah joined us in the 60cm class and therefore we could enter as an EMRC team. Teams can be made up of 3 or 4 members with the top 3 scores counting.

With times issued the day before, tack cleaned and the lorry loaded with beautiful EMRC embroidered saddle cloths and hat silks, we headed off with butterflies in the belly!

Connie was second to go in the 60cm class so a quick warm up, abandoned her with mum to do the course walk, and it was her turn to go in before we knew it. She was really brave considering she finds most things scary and only had 1 unfortunate pole down. Hattie's turn soon followed and she did a clear round! So pleased with them both and the confidence round that we needed. Sarah did amazing too, and as we were updating Debbie and Chelsea on our rounds, we caught the last bit of the results being announced "for East Mendip Riding Club in second place". "What us, in second place.... Sarah we came team second!!!" Rosettes collected and time to gather our thoughts ready for the team 70cm rounds. Luckily they kept the same course plus one additional jump so the worry of forgetting the course was lessened a little. With all horses tacked up, we each did our round with everyone else cheering on from the side lines. Only a friendly little supportive club, like EMRC, do you have another member give up their morning to come and support on the ground and be chief videographer, thanks Ella!! Hattie and Connie both went clear, ahhh, so pleased with them. Their scores counted towards putting EMRC Red Team in 7th place.

A successful day all round and a lot less scary than we thought. If you fancy giving it a go, have a chat with Debbie Pickford. There is no pressure to jump 'big'; most of the classes start at 50cm so accessible for lots of us. You don't even need all the gear, just beg, borrow and steal from your team mates!



Debbie and Bandit



Sarah and Claude



Chelsea and Honey



Linda and AJ



Jodie and Jack



Alex and Connie



Jo and Hattie



Hoofing Around



Area 12 Showing Jumping Debbie Pickford

On the 20th November 2021, EMRC was represented by 2 teams at the Area 12 show jumping competition at Kings Sedgemoor where both teams put in a very credible performance.

The 70cm team consisting of Sue Hamblin, Karen Abrey, Chelsea Millward and Debbie Pickford managed to bag a 3rd place in the senior team event, despite a fall by one of the team.

The 80cm team of Linda Price, Chelsea Millward, Sarah Davenport and Debbie Pickford also put in a brilliant performance and were unlucky not to be in the placings.

We are a small club and to be able to send 2 teams to such an event is something we should all be proud of.

If anyone is interested in being part of a team in the future, please contact Debbie on debbiepickford@outlook.com



Area 12 Novice Dressage Qualifiers Ella Hooper

Huge congratulations to all the riders who took part in the Area 12 Novice Dressage Qualifiers at Kings Sedgemoor on the 27th February 2022.

Sarah Davenport and Ella Hooper were first to compete in the Introductory A class. Both did well with Sarah coming 4th and Ella winning the class.

For the team competition, Debbie Pickford finished 16th in the Prelim 2 class. Ella Hooper finished 18th in the Prelim 12, Jodie Bennett finished 22nd in the Novice 24 and Samantha Lander finished 19th in the Novice 28 class. The team finished a very respectable 15th out of 17 teams, on what was a very busy day with all classes heavily supported. You all were amazing and did the club proud.



Future upcoming provisional dates for dressage competitions are as follows:

- ◆ Dressage To Music (potentially holding an intro qualifier 2x Intro test and 2x Prelim tests) May 2022 at Kings Sedgemoor Equestrian Centre. Date and details to be confirmed.
- ◆ Summer Dressage Championship, 9th July 2022 at Chard Equestrian.

All details will be shared once they are available.

If anyone would like to represent the Club in any future team/individual dressage competitions or have any queries about the dressage teams/comps, please feel free to email Ella Hooper. Ellahooper12@hotmail.com



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E-Riders Riding Club Summer League

The Summer League (March to August 2021) sash and massive rosette has been making its way around to the members who contributed to EMRC's 3rd place in the Riding Club Summer League; and don't they all look great wearing it!



Congratulations



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E-Riders Riding Club Winter League Debbie Pickford



EMRC have had around 15 members taking part in the E-Riders Riding Club League over the winter. The winter league runs from September to February inclusive, and has tests for everyone from Intro through to the higher levels. By entering a class, the club gains 1 point. Additional points are added for placings from 1st down to 10th place. Each month you receive in the post your individual place rosette and your score sheets with a sweet or treat of some sort - so it is all fun and worthwhile.

EMRC have led the league from the start and having just competed in the final month in the Winter League, EMRC have only gone and won, with a lead of over 200 points. Everyone has done exceptionally well. On top of the team event, some riders have had top 10 placings with some impressive scores and some very good wins as well across most of the levels.

Fancy giving it a go? Why not get in touch with Debbie on debbiepickford@outlook.com or Ella on Ellahooper12@hotmail.com and they will answer any questions you may have and add you to the group chat where we all support each other along the way.

Place	Rider Name	Horse Name	Sep 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Feb 2022	Total Points
1	East Mendip Riding Club		62	99	102	114	106	85	568
2	Solent RC		53	54	53	52	47	74	333
3	Malvern Hills Riding Club		46	45	57	32	45	20	245
4	Vale of Aeron Riding Club		21	20	20	18	17	19	115
5	Light Cavalry Supporting Riders Club		25	20	2	3	0	8	58
6	Newcastle Riding Club		9	0	10	11	10	10	50
7	Torfaen Riding Club		11	11	9	7	7	0	45
8	South Oxfordshire Riding Club		0	0	2	9	16	10	37
9	Cumbria Riding Club		9	4	4	8	8	4	37
10	West Surrey Riding club		0	0	0	0	11	0	11
11	Kings Leaze Riding Club		0	0	4	0	3	0	7
12	Hailsham Equestrian Club		0	0	4	0	0	0	4
13	Dyffryn Paith Riding Group		0	1	0	0	0	0	1

E-Riders BD League - there is light at the end of the tunnel! Sue Hamblin



I've never considered myself a "dressage person". I've definitely never considered Archie (16.1 at the wither, 17hh on his arse, long and lollopy) a dressage horse. Both of these considerations borne out by two years of multiple attempts (and failures) to achieve the lofty heights of 60%. But we (separately... together he scared the living daylights out of me) enjoy jumping, and as long as there are absolutely no ditches to be seen, Archie is a cross country jumping machine.

So when an email went round asking anyone interested in joining the E-Riders Riding Club League in April last year, I think the madness of home schooling derailed me and lead to delusions of capability. I was signed up to the Dressage Diva's group. It took me two whole months to notice. But I didn't actually get anywhere near actually entering a test. We like to build up to things.



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Come May 2021, I entered the EMRC “Have A Go” dressage. Everyone should have a go at this. One test “as yourself”, a ten minute mini lesson with the wonderful, gentle, encouraging judge (Gill Longhurst), and another go at the same test, trying to implement the little changes as you go. This was a revelation! But dressage was still very much a means to an end (the end being the cross country course).

In June (three months after first finding out about E-Riders), much encouraged by our Have A Go experience, I decided that we’d venture into the world of online dressage. My poor, long suffering, ever encouraging OH, Nigel, came out and videoed our test. And then came out again two days later and filmed it again. And three days after that. Eventually we managed a test that I decided wouldn’t embarrass anyone too much, sent it in, sat back and waited for results day. That first results day I didn’t really appreciate what was heading my way... but as it was, a seventh place in the prelim class, and a massive 67% and I was blown away!

Much buoyed by this success, Arch and I made our way off to The Hannah Francis One Day Event at Larkhill. Back to earth with a bit of a bump. Our dreams of flying around the cross country course lasted less than two seconds into the dressage test. As this point Arch clamped his tail down, bounced into a cracking canter half pass (admittedly against my leg, hollow, and fighting for his head), jumped out of our arena at B, across the dividing area, and into the neighbouring arena at E. Perhaps he was just heading straight to the XC start? We headed home in disgrace (but not before the boy broke free in the lorry park no less than three super embarrassing times, rampaging around with a trail of riders and stewards trying to corner him). Ho hum.

Maybe it was as punishment that I decided that if we can’t hold it together out and about, we’d do ALL the dressage from the safety of our home school. So I entered the poor boy for the Riding Club League in July. And the British Eventing League class. And two classes in the British Dressage League. With my habit of recording each test more than once, Archie rather suddenly found himself trotting many, many circles. And repeating many, many transitions. And whenever I looked back at the videos of our tests I’d be initially mortified by my position, the squareness of my circles, the wobbliness of our centre lines.



But by the end of the month there were some notable improvements. And after six months of the British Dressage League, Archie is barely recognisable as that same unlikely dressage horse (unless he spots pigs or donkeys - all bets are off then!). He has achieved a PB of 76% in Prelim, we’re contemplating our first Novice test, and he won both the British Dressage and British Eventing Leagues through E-Riders.

If it wasn’t for that first Have A Go dressage, and all of the subsequent E-Riders tests, I really don’t think I would have found the motivation for that amount of schooling we’ve done in the last nine months. I’m certain I wouldn’t have pushed through the times when I’ve felt my confidence waiver (once I saw the smallest chance of getting the champion title, I wasn’t about to drop a test just because Arch was a bit fresh/scary or it was a bit wet and blowy out). There isn’t a snowball’s chance that we would have come as far as we have this year, and a year ago I would have ridden past a flying pig (see previous) before suggesting that we might give Novice a go. And... our jumping, and cross country has improved beyond recognition (having a semblance of control between fences is surprisingly effective).

Tempted? Have a word with one of our fabulous team members taking part in the Riding Club League. It’s not only for fancy dressage ponies - we’re competing every size and shape of steed between the 15 of us in the current League, all without the need to leave the comfort and security of your own yard. No show kit needed, no plaiting, and take as many goes as you want. And all with the EMRC Dressage Ninjas cheering you on!



Hoofing Around



EMRC Merchandise

Fancy being adorned in EMRC gear?
Visit www.ggear.co.uk for purchasing any of these lovely items!

 Adults Regatta Dover Jacket, Royal Blue, East Mendip Riding Club	 Adults EMRC Royal Base Layer	 Unisex East Mendip Riding Club Royal Softshell Bodywarmer. 46601	 East Mendip Riding Club Women's Royal Softshell Bodywarmer 46801	 East Mendip Riding Club Adults Royal Unisex Polo Shirt BA301	 Royal Blue East Mendip Riding Club Hat Silk
 East Mendip Riding Club Adults Royal Sweatshirt BA409	 Adults ladies fit East Mendip Riding Club Royal Softshell Jacket 46900	 Adults Unisex fit East Mendip Riding Club Royal Softshell Jacket 46600	 East Mendip Riding Club Adults Royal Unisex Long Sleeve Polo Shirt BA301L	 Adults East Mendip Riding Club Royal Hoody	

We also have Insulated Mugs and *****NEW***** baseball caps which will be available from Kingfisher on dates that clinics are running.

Insulated Mugs - £15



Baseball cap - £15



We would love to hear your reviews of the merchandise, so once you have received your purchases, please let us know what you think. eastmendipridingclub@gmail.com

I have a shell woman's gilet. It is a medium and I find it fits me well so guess it would be a size 12 but then I am quite small busted so I think larger busted ladies would need to buy a size bigger.

I have a polo shirt - good fit, great value and hard wearing. I have had it a couple of years and wear it all the time. They are unisex so generous on size. Small is 35-37" and medium is 38-40".



Hoofing Around



Laminitis - Advice from World Horse Welfare

What is laminitis?

Laminitis is an extremely painful condition that can affect any horse, pony, donkey or mule. The first thing to note is that **laminitis is a veterinary emergency** and you should contact your vet immediately if you suspect your horse might have it. Laminitis causes severe pain and lameness which needs emergency first aid and veterinary treatment. Laminitis occurs when the finger-like projections of the lamellar layer, which support the pedal bone of the foot within the hoof capsule, become weakened by losing their normal shape. This results in instability of the pedal bone within the foot, potential inflammation and signs of pain and lameness.

What causes laminitis?

Laminitis is usually a consequence of an underlying hormonal disorder and/or an inflammatory condition. Hormonal disorders which contribute to many laminitis episodes include equine metabolic syndrome (EMS) and pituitary pars intermedia dysfunction (PPID, or equine Cushing's disease). Inflammatory responses can be triggered by a variety of events or conditions. Such responses can occur after carbohydrate overload – for example, your horse pigging out on spring grass! – or in very sick animals with body-wide septic infections – such as complications after surgery or a retained placenta. Laminitis can also be a risk in cases where the horse is unable to bear weight on one limb, as the opposite foot will be bearing so much more weight than it should do. However, it is important to note that the most common cause of laminitis is an underlying metabolic condition.

What are the signs of laminitis?

Common signs of laminitis include

- Strong/bounding digital pulses felt at the back of the fetlock.
- Reluctance to walk forward.
- Difficulty making a tight turn.
- Excessive heat in the feet.
- Shifting weight from foot to foot when at rest.
- Lameness, stiffness, or a short, stilted or pottery walk, especially on hard ground.

How is laminitis treated and managed?

Whilst treatment is very much animal-specific, three general steps include

- Initial treatment, which involves restricted movement, pain relief and appropriate foot support.
- Once stabilised, therapeutic shoeing/trimming as well as diagnosis, treatment and management of any hormonal disorders.
- Finally, on-going careful management of your horse's diet, exercise regime and footcare regime. Your vet and farrier will be able to advise on exactly what your horse needs at each stage. Laminitis is not a disease in itself, it is a clinical sign – which means it's vital to understand the underlying cause (most often a metabolic condition) and treat that as well.

How do you prevent your horse from getting laminitis?

When it comes to laminitis, the old saying that "prevention is better than cure" is very true. Two large studies funded by World Horse Welfare have identified three important risk factors

- Recent weight gain more than doubled the risk of laminitis developing.
- Horses and ponies with a history of laminitis are more likely to suffer future episodes (which should be treated just as seriously as the first one).
- Foot soreness after shoeing/trimming almost tripled the likelihood of laminitis occurring.

Making sure your horse or pony is the right weight is really important when it comes to preventing laminitis – as is avoiding unintentional weight gain. It can be really difficult to notice our horses gaining weight when we see them every day, which is why regular weight monitoring and fat scoring are so important.



WorldHorseWelfare

Since horses and ponies which have had laminitis previously are at a significantly increased risk of suffering further bouts, being vigilant in your management to prevent your horse from suffering an attack of laminitis in the first place really is the best way to protect them.



Hoofing Around



Guideline on whisker trimming

Why are whiskers important to horses?

Horses' whiskers are long, specialised hairs that grow from the muzzle and around the eyes. Research on horses and other animals suggests that they provide horses with important information about their surroundings, helping them to:

- Know how far objects are from their muzzle and eyes
- This helps to protect their muzzle and eyes from injury
- Feel what is on the ground
- This helps them to avoid eating objects that could be harmful
- Understand and feel safe in their environment
- Whiskers may be the only way horses have of knowing what is in the 'blind spots' in front of their faces and under their noses.



Which organisations have banned trimming whiskers?

Trimming of whiskers has been banned by the FEI, the German, Swiss, and French national equestrian federations, British Dressage, British Eventing, and a number of shows and breed societies in the UK.

BRC Hat Regulations from 1st January 2023

An early note from British Riding Club HQ. From 1st January 2023, BRC will no longer be accepting two hat standards.

In order to ensure riders are wearing the most up-to-date riding hats, please note that from the 1st January 2023, the following hat standards will no longer be accepted, due to the age of hats made to these standards:

1. PAS O15 1998
2. SNELL 2001



A new colour of hat tag will be required for BE, PC and BRC from 1st January 2023.



DON'T FORGET

Clocks go forward on 27th March 2022

Enjoy those lighter evenings!



Hoofing Around



Highway Code Changes

Following their review of the Highway Code, the government announced changes aimed at improving the safety of vulnerable road users in January 2022.

Changes include drivers being advised to pass or approach horses at a **maximum of 10mph** (including Exmoor, Dartmoor and New Forest ponies), and **allow at least 2 metres of space**, the BHS 'Dead Slow' campaign behaviour change messages and the 'three brains working' concept: the rider's, the driver's, and the horse's. In addition, another Highway Code recommendation is for riders to consider taking the **BHS Ride Safe Award** before riding out on the road.

Don't be a dark horse

Hi-viz is vital for helping to keep you and your horse safe when you're out and about.

Whatever the time or season, make sure you stand out from the crowd.

Be seen, be safe.

horseaccidents.org.uk

Friends of EMRC Hacking Group

We know lots of our members love their hacking and aren't competitive, therefore we have set up a 'Friends of EMRC Hacking Group' on Facebook messenger. This is a friendly group chat to share hacking routes and an opportunity to meet up with others. Any arrangements made will not be covered by EMRC or BRC, it is just a group chat where people have formed friendships through the club! Drop a message on Facebook if you would like to be added.



Hoofing Around



**Who, What, Where, When?
On Fun Rides
Alex & Jo Hobbs**

Who?

Fun rides are for anyone, any age of rider, at any level. Horses have to be over 4 years of age, but we see all breeds, shapes and sizes of horses completing fun rides, and having a great time doing it. Often rides are organised by a bridledway group or a hunt supporters club, sometimes with a proportion of the money raised from entry fees going to a charity. We find a lot of the fun rides advertised on Facebook or on Riding Diary so it pays to keep an eye on local groups for upcoming rides being advertised. Entry fees generally range from £15 - £25 depending on the length of the route and if jumps are provided, which for 2 - 3 hours of riding is good value for money.

Where?

Fun rides take place all across the country, with lots taking place within the South West. We will travel up to 2 hours each way to attend a fun ride (roughly 120 mile round trip) which takes us up to Gloucester, down to Dorset, over to Wales and across to Wiltshire/Hampshire. Parking is generally in the field where the route will start from with toilets and refreshments available at many of them (appreciated after a 2 hour drive and a 2 - 3 hour ride!) Exploring places you have never been before and taking in the amazing scenery on route is one of the highlights of attending a fun ride. Generally there is a professional photographer on route to capture those big smiles and a rosette to take home. A couple of the rides last year have provided goody bags as well, polos and carrots for the horses, and gin and chocolate for the riders!!



What?

Fun rides are non-competitive, which takes all the pressure off of the rider. The routes are marked, usually by tags or arrows and are roughly between 8 - 12 miles. Some organisers offer a short route between 3 - 6 miles for those who may not want to ride the full distance, horses aren't fit enough, possibly a young horse's first outing, or children being led. Fun rides are not a race, there is no set time to complete the ride in, and no pressure to ride at a certain speed.

The terrain can vary which makes them all the more fun, from the flat droves of the Somerset Levels to the hills of Exmoor. We have encountered steep ascents, steep descents, river crossings, ditches, canal crossings, bridges, tunnels, grass headlands, woodlands, stone tracks and lanes.

Some organisers set up some jumps along the route, they are always optional so you can decide if you want to go over, or around them! They vary in height from logs on the ground to hedges, walls or professional XC courses.

When?

Fun rides take place all summer, usually our first one is early April and we go to 1 or 2 rides every weekend until October. Occasionally they have to cancel if the weather has been really bad and they cannot get lorries into the fields if they are wet, or the crops along the route haven't been cut. They tend to take place on a weekend or a bank holiday with a couple of the bigger rides being held on both Saturday and Sunday. Since Covid, most organisers are still only accepting pre-bookings, with start times being provided. This helps to spread people out across the course so that there are not big groups of people starting at the same time.



Hoofing Around



Fancy an adventure with your horse? Karen Butt and Elle

Some of you will have heard me going on about TREC, a sport I've come to love. It provides adventurous rides, in beautiful places and is a test of skills for both you and your horse which really builds your partnership. Our local Club, TREC Southwest is very active and welcoming. They put on training and competitions for members and non-members. There are also competitions around the country making the most of riding opportunities in wonderful locations.

TREC is an international trail riding sport with its roots in France, it has three phases. Orienteering across a wide range of terrains, with routes from 10 to 45km.

A course of obstacles that tests your partnership with your horse in tackling hazards you would meet riding out in the countryside, for example water, gates and even standing still!

Finally there is the Control of Paces section testing the horse's ability to maintain a fast walk and slow canter over a given distance.

Summer competitions often involve all 3 phases, whilst winter ones are usually held in an arena and focus on the obstacles and control of paces phases.



I started out in TREC with a young horse having not ridden for 30 years and with just a bit of knowledge of reading a road map. The entry level classes gave me a good opportunity to grow the confidence of both my horse and myself and learn the skills needed to use a compass and read an OS Map. The emphasis when out riding is on the accuracy of map reading and not on speed. Riders are sent out at timed intervals so you don't get crowds of riders travelling at great speed!

One of the rules that makes TREC so good for confidence building is that you don't have to complete every obstacle, so if there is something you or your horse aren't ready or able to do, you can simply take a zero score for that obstacle and move on, what a huge relief and makes a competition very doable!

Elle and I have now clocked up over 250kms of competitive orienteering and competed at National Level competitions, map reading is an ongoing learning experience but I haven't got seriously lost yet! Summer competitions are often held over a weekend which involves corralling your horse and camping in your trailer or lorry. All good fun and very sociable! People who aren't into camping do often B&B for themselves and their horses so if you're not a camper don't be put off!



If you would like to find out more, EMRC is putting on a training day on 10th July, see the summer programme for details and also check out the TREC Southwest Facebook page and website for up-to-date information on events being planned this summer. These include orienteering rides in Dorchester and on the Quantocks, plus a full 3 phase competition at Stourhead.



I'm always happy to talk TREC, so if you have any questions or if you want to give it a go, let's have a chat!

www.trecsouthwest.co.uk
www.trecgb.com



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What3Words

Most of you reading this have already heard about what3words and possibly have the app downloaded to your phone already, but for those who haven't, I recommend that you consider doing so.

How it works: This is quite mind-boggling but basically the whole world has been divided up into 3 metre squares and each of these have been given a combination of 3 words unique to each individual square. So wherever you are, be it in the middle of the ocean, on top of a mountain or in a country lane out hacking on your horse, if you have the app on your phone it will give you the 3 words specifying your exact location so that in an emergency, you can notify the rescue services and be found. It's a simple but amazing idea and no doubt has helped saved many lives, and not just humans.

We all take risks when we ride our horses, sadly accidents happen, it may not necessarily be anything horse related at all, but if you have this app downloaded to your phone and have to call any emergency services, this will save so much time in finding exactly where you are rather than having to explain that you are in a middle of a field or down a country lane somewhere but not actually having a clue where you are!

Have a look at your phone now, download the app, you can find it on Google play, it costs nothing but could save a life.



To find where you are currently, the app will use your phones location. You can give these 3 unique words to the emergency services.

To find the 3 unique words for a specific location, use the search bar to type in the address, for example, Kingfisher Equestrian. You can then 'switch to satellite' view by clicking on the map icon. Zoom in and you will see the gridlines for the 3 metre squares. Click on the square for the location you want, which will give you the unique 3 words.

Try it, do you get 'daunted.swerving.obstruct' for the entrance gate at Kingfisher?

To navigate to a location, type in the search bar the unique 3 words given to you. Be sure to check you have it correct as a slight variation will take you to a different location! The entrance driveway to Kingfisher is 'rocky.feed.rant'. If you aren't careful you may end up in Norway just by adding an s to 'feed'!!! Type the unique 3 words into the search bar and click on navigate. This will then work like a satnav (by using AppleMaps, for example) giving you directions to that specific location.