



Hoofing Around



July 2016

Chairmans Report

It's amazing to think that from little acorns, grow big Oak trees (I think that's the expression)! Who would have thought that back in August 2015 when the club had the open night that it would appeal to so many!

The club has been busy over the last few months, all our clinics have been well attended and both the Trec Taster day and camp have proved really popular. It has been lovely to just how your confidence has grown with your riding—the whole point of the club and a huge success as far as your committee are concerned.

Do make sure you look at the events schedule that gets emailed around or the events section on the website and get booking! Certain clinics are very popular and get booked up quickly.

It will be great to see as many of you as possible at our 1st Birthday Party on the 19th August—and do tell your friends about us!

On a personal note I would like to say a huge thank you to the committee for their work over the last year and in particular to Jo, the club's secretary.

Have a great rest of the summer.

Sam



Events

Saturday August 13th— Mounted Treasure Hunt—Hill Farm
Friday 19th August—1st Birthday Party—The Bell at Leigh on Mendip
Friday 2nd September—Tack Sale—Royal British Legion Coleford
Sunday 11th September—Have A Go Dressage—Thornhill House, Bruton
Saturday 17th September—Trec Practise Day—Hill Farm

Clinics

To Be Advised

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Trec Taster Day—Naomi Gooderson

Toby my 14.1hh coloured cob and I have been together for just over a year. He is my first pony and has had to be very patient with me. Finally we have reached a time where we are both trusting each other and are feeling ready to start branching out and trying new things. So when I saw the Trec Taster day come up in the EMRC newsletter I decided to give it a try.

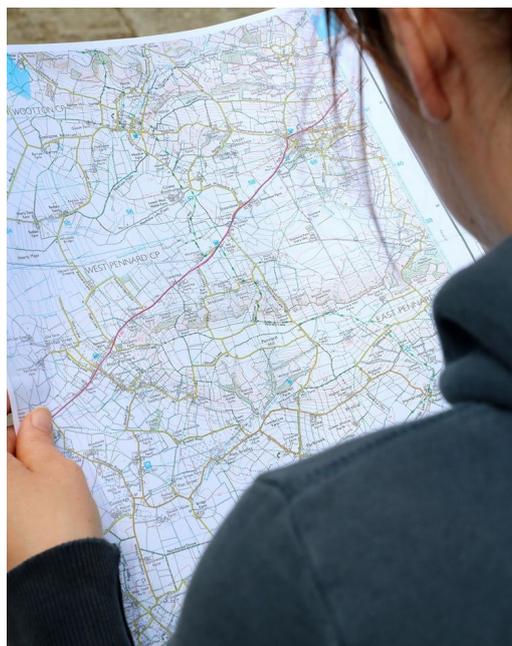
We arrived at Hill Farm in East Pennard and were instantly taken back by the beautiful views. Anne, the owner of Hill Farm and all the other fellow riding club members greeted us in the usual friendly EMRC way. Then Anne led us to the stables she has ready for us to use. Once Toby was settled happily munching on his hay net we human participants were introduced to Hilary Barnard from the TREC GB team. Hilary sat us all around and gave us a briefing on Trec, where it came from, how it first started and what it consists of. What an interesting sport! Trec is made up of three different phases, orienteering, control of paces and agility.

Orienteering—

everyone was given a copy of a map on which we had to copy the planned route from the master map. We tacked up our trusty steeds and off we went down the beautiful bridle paths of East Pennard has to offer. It was a lovely opportunity to hack out in new surroundings with an added element of map reading—and we all love a good hack, horse and human! Hilary went easy on us for her planned route, taking into account our lack of map reading skills and bad sense of direction! In a Trec competition entry level 1 consists of a 10km ride, level 2 20km, level 3 30km and top level 4—40km!

Control of Paces—I really enjoyed this phase. There was a long stretch of grass marked out approximately 2-3m wide and 30-240m long in which we were to canter all the way along the slowest we could, turn around and then walk back as fast as we could, without breaking pace. Well Toby really wanted to try and canter as fast as he could, forever enthusiastic and also march back as fast as he could, so we did actually score some points for this great speedy walk.

My fellow Trec team members Liz Lukins and Basil managed a beautiful collected canter up the stretch of grass. Liz and I decided that if we could enter a competition with Basil's canter and Toby's walk we would definitely win!



Obstacle Course—Hilary had set up various obstacles and agility tasks for us to have a go at. First of all we walked our horses around all the different spooky horse objects until they had decided it was safe enough for us to have a go at. What fun! There were things to ride circles around, corridors to walk or trot through, a S shaped labyrinth to bend through and many more. Toby was a star at the weaving poles, I think his days as a pony club gymkhanas came flooding back to him and he took it all in his stride. As an adult who wasn't lucky enough to have a pony during childhood days to take to gymkhanas, this was definitely the next best thing!

All in all a great sport and a fantastic day. Thank you to everyone who organised it and made it happen, we both thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and have definitely got the Trec bug—who knows maybe next year we will enter a Level 1 competition as an EMRC team!!!

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Ponies, paradise and wildflowers—Karen Butt

It was Spring 2014, the fresh grass was coming through and we were too slow to react. As a result one of the old ponies came down with acute laminitis, a horrible sight. As she recovered we tried restricting her grazing but she kept escaping and we really felt there must be a better way than this. Then we heard from the foot trimmer about Paddock Paradise, a system of grazing that mimics the horses natural movement in the wild. It's a system developed by Jamie Jackson who has studied wild horses in America. We were immediately inspired and set about creating our own little bit of paradise with no more than a few plastic fencing stakes and some electric tape.



Creating paradise meant setting up a track around the outside of the field, on average about 15 feet in from the hedge boundary. In some places like around the water trough, where the horses liked to shelter from the sun and where they were fed, we provided more room so they could socialise. Unsure what would happen next we released the ponies into the outer track between the hedge and the electric tape and guess what.....the ponies quickly settled and moved freely around the track. After a few escape issues we bought some taller stakes and that sorted that little problem!

The system aims to promote movement amongst the herd and we enjoyed watching as they moved each other along the track using every bit of it for different purposes. We soon got to know where the horses rolled, rested, sheltered and groomed each other. It really was a delight to watch them use their space. They all got fitter and leaner and all signs of laminitis disappeared.

With a bit more thought we got creative, what more could we make of this space? We were able to open up a little bit of woodland for them and bought a field shelter and now our thoughts are moving towards restoring the old dew pond in the field and building them a sand pit.



Another really exciting aspect was that it more than just the ponies that were blossoming with this new grazing idea. As that first summer progressed we noticed a fantastic range of wildflowers having time to grow, flower and seed within the track inner circle. We had known there were some flowers but had never seen them like this before. In summer 2015 it happened again and I invited Jake from Somerset Wildlife Trust to take a look. He was amazed and delighted to find 49 different species of flower and grass during a one hour visit. He was also intrigued by the grazing set up and could immediately see how it could be adapted for use to benefit landowners who would like wildflowers and horse owners who want fitter, healthier horses.

As a result in June, Somerset Wildlife Trust in conjunction with Caroline Wang-Andreson, barefoot trimmer, held a training afternoon explaining more about the Paddock Paradise or track system of grazing and how to combine it with supporting the abundance of wildflowers. The talk was followed by a visit to our little bit of paradise to see the track system in operation and enjoy the wildflowers at their best. There has been so much interest in this combination that a second session has been arranged for the 11th August. Places can be booked by calling Somerset Wildlife Trust on 01823 652472.

Jamie Jackson's book is Paddock Paradise. A Guide to Natural Horse Boarding (Star Ridge Publishing). I devoured it in 2 hours, it's a really inspiring read!

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Poles and Show Jumping on Grass Sarah Clarke

Grace and I are complete beginners and pole work and jumping, having previously together had one introductory session with another member of the club. I have not jumped since I was a child and so was quite nervous on the morning!



Kim was lovely! Very encouraging and appreciative of everyone's needs and that we were all at different stages of learning to jump. Anne had set up some brilliant pole work exercises in her paddock and with Kim's help we were soon trotting over them and gradually getting the hang of it. This is really good for Grace to help with balance and rhythm and focus and Kim explained to us the importance of rhythm and making sure that you keep it between jumps.

Grace actually remained pretty calm which I was pleased about given this is only her second riding club clinic and that boosted my confidence tremendously.

There were three of us in our group so we each got to try lots of the pole exercises, and it was really interesting to watch the others taking their turns, and how Kim adapted the exercises to suit us all individually.

Then we were faced with two jumps (!). Whilst they were really very small my brain saw them as enormous! On Grace's first attempt she was rather distracted by new arrivals and demolished both of them. By the second time round with some encouragement from Kim and more focus from me we popped over both of them brilliantly.



One thing I love about EMRC is that everyone celebrates everyone's goals with them, no matter how small, and even if they have passed that stage some time ago. Popping over those two jumps was definitely an achievement for me!

We finished the class with some things to practise at home to help our balance and rhythm and a big smile on our faces! Thank you!



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**EMRC Camp
Jo Rossiter**

Friday 8th July to Sunday 10th July saw East Mendip Riding Club's First Adult Camp and boy what a weekend it was!

It was held at Downlands Equestrian Centre at Tytherington near Warminster and places were limited to just 10 horses due to stabling. We had an absolutely fantastic weekend with some lovely if windy weather. Sam our Chairman and Anne Pearce our very knowledgeable committee member did the most incredible job of feeding us all and keeping us in check and apparently I provide great entertainment after consuming a bottle of wine!!! (What goes on tour stays on tour and you will never know if you weren't there!!).



So, we asked the girls that went what they thought of it—and here is what they have to say:

“Taking my rather excitable young horse to stay away for the first time was a big ask for him. The instructors and the other members were all so supportive and encouraging that we both had great fun and I really enjoyed the whole weekend—especially the cream tea! Thanks so much to the committee—it was brilliant.” Liz and Basil



“Loved it and very proud to have been part of the EMRC Camp. Never having experienced any riding camps in my youth, this opportunity was one not to be missed! OAP or not! The feelings that most sum up the whole weekend—Friendship, Fun and Fantastic Food. Lilli and I both came home safe, happy, grubby, tired, proud and fatter with lovely memories of our achievements. Who could ask for more? Brilliant job EMRC—you gave us all a super camp”. Ginnie and Lilli

“I have never been on a riding camp before and it was one of the best weekends I have had! Grace and I are both very novice at all disciplines but we had great fun and learnt a lot. Everyone is so supportive of your own individual progress and I came away from all the sessions with things to practise at home. It was nice to get to know some of the other members outside of the riding as well during the evenings and the food was great! All round great weekend and looking forward to the next one”. Sarah and Grace



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Mendip Bridleways & Byways Association

Have you ever wondered who keeps the routes you ride in decent order? Who mends the gates, cuts back the hedges and removes fallen trees? Whose responsibility is it anyway? Actually, it is all quite complicated!

Your local Council is responsible for the **surface** of the bridleway if it is a Right of Way. That means that once a year, more if you are very lucky, most routes are strimmed by Council contractors. There is also a responsibility to repair any damage which appears to the ground and to remove obstacles blocking the route.

However, the gates and hedges either side, are the responsibility of the landowner and he **should** include them in his annual hedge cutting and also mend any gates that are not working properly. This is in an ideal world and does not always happen so the Council will, in some instances mend gates. They will also contact the landowner and ask him to do his statutory duty to cut the hedges, which is a requirement of his Farm payment.

The budget at County Hall for maintenance on Rights of way is dribbling away. Each year there are cuts and as this small money pot is also shared with footpath maintenance, it does not go far enough.

Step up Mendip Bridleways & Byways Association! One of the largest, friendliest and most proactive in the country. MBBA is a totally voluntary organisation, funded by its members' subscriptions, fund raising events and rides. We frequently joint fund projects with Somerset County Council, pushing them to stretch their funds further. We use and fund our own contractors to re-surface and improve routes that have become impassable and we will, if necessary, repair and replace gates when the landowner is unwilling to do so. We work closely with the Rights of Way wardens and have a very good and 'active' working relationship with the staff at County Hall. Our project reports on our website speak for themselves. www.mbba.org.uk. With the latest news on our facebook page.

Over the past ten years we have raised nearly £100,000 - all of it ploughed back into your riding routes. Without our ongoing effort the rights of way in Mendip would be in a very sorry state but we need YOUR support. Our Rights of Way do not look after themselves - so please take action today and help us to help you and future generations enjoy our region's outstanding natural beauty and join MBBA.

Membership of MBBA is only £15.00 for which you receive special members' rates at our events and rides plus two informative newsletters a year. There is always someone at the end of a phone to help you with your bridleway queries and we will investigate all problems reported to us. As a member, you will also be able to obtain marked up maps of your area, showing all the routes open to ride.

Forthcoming changes in rights of way legislation and budgets mean that we need your support more than ever in order to safeguard the future of our bridleways and off road riding.

MBBA supports you and your riding, please support MBBA

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