



BRIEFING

Newsletter for Eventers

January / February 2011

Many thanks to Michael Vogt

During his tenure as editor of the GHS eventing newsletter, Michael has managed to keep the GHS eventers not only well-informed but also highly entertained, not an easy feat when one considers his audience: somewhat discerning and desperately demanding! It is often only when people are gone do others really appreciate the enormous vacuum that their absence leaves, which is what happened following Michael's resignation! On behalf of GHS and all of the eventers, I would like to extend a huge thank you to Michael for all of the time he spent not only on the newsletter, but also the proverbial blood, sweat and tears he expended on promoting SA Eventing generally. Michael, your efforts have not gone unnoticed!

SA Eventing Championships: Inanda Country Base: 3-5 December 2010

With the excitement of WEG well and truly behind us, everyone's focus shifted to SA Champs. It was highly appropriate that ICB, the veritable home of SA Eventing, was chosen to host the 45th Championships. Tim Payne, with 30 years of course building experience behind him, was tasked with building the testing tracks, a job made all the more difficult with the heavy rains we experienced in Gauteng immediately prior to Champs.

Ever the perfectionist, Tim and his dedicated team once again managed to produce truly superb courses and perfectly manicured arenas and the spectators were treated to some of South Africa's most impressive sport's horses galloping over a magnificent track. The fences were world-class and were interesting for both competitors and spectators alike with the show-organisers having pulled out all of the stops to design and decorate the fences boldly and creatively. All of the obstacles were built to size and whilst fair, there were several difficult and challenging questions asked of the riders and their horses, which is what one would expect from a Championship event and a "Tim Payne" course!

GHS had no less than 9 qualifiers for the 1* competition, with Graham Winn, Francois Viljoen, Michelle Jarman, Shane Rorke, Coreen Barker Andrew Webb and Nicky Mitchell all vying for top honours.

Fresh back from his globe-trotting, Gauteng's very own Graham Winn rode into first place in the 1* with Francois Viljoen stepping up onto the third spot on the winner's podium.

Huge congratulations to Paige who, riding her trusty steed, Centre Forward managed 5th spot in the 2*. Haley Parker did us all exceptionally proud when she managed to take second place in the show-stop event, riding her steed Alzu Alaska. Well done ladies!

Congratulations also to the following riders: Daniella Zijp (1st place 80cm Junior); Amy Billet (1st place 80cm Adult Pool 1); Michelle Blaau (1st place 80cm Adult, Pool 2); Tegan Bruyns (4th place Pony 80cm); Tasmin Daniels (1st Junior 90cm); Graham Winn (1st place Adult 90cm Pool 1); Carl Boonzaier (1st place Adult 90cm Pool 2); Alexandra Munn (1st place Pony 90cm); and Patrick Brown (1st place, Adult 1m).

There were many sponsors who made the staging of this event possible. We appreciate your generosity and continued support. Many thanks must go especially to WoW saddles, Velcro and Boehringer Ingelheim who were the major sponsors who contributed towards the success of the show.

Arranging a show of this magnitude is generally a thankless task and the vast majority of us have no appreciation as to how much time and effort goes into it. Many thanks must go to the organising committee for arranging show that Gauteng can be proud of!



Graham Winn riding in the 1* (photograph courtesy of T&B Images)



The 2* winner and 2010 South African Eventing Champions, Mandy Mason and Pohlands Cappuccino, tackling the Velcro fence in fine style!
(photograph courtesy of T&B Images)



Patrick Brown demonstrating Lucinda's "safety seat"! (Photograph courtesy of T&B Images)



Tamsin Daniels who went on to win the Junior 90cm (photograph courtesy of T&B Images)



Centre Forward showing everyone just how scopey he is!
(Photograph courtesy of T&B Images)



Mandy Mason clearing the WoW obstacle!
(Photograph courtesy of T&B Images)

SA Interprovincial Junior Championships: Cape Town, 11-12th December 2010

Our juniors certainly flew the Gauteng flag high at the SA Interprovincial Junior Championships, which was held in Port Elizabeth on 11th and 12th December. Sophie Forrester, riding Cheignon Lightening Shot, placed a very credible 11th. Raquel McHardy together with Polish Quest managed to clinch 9th spot. Well done Sophie and Raquel! Special mention must be made of Katie Keller who rode the Championship of her life, coming third on Silver Sapphire and then taking top honours on her other mount, Blue Bayou. With riders like Sophie, Raquel and Katie, Gauteng eventing can only go from strength to strength!



Katie Keller and Blue Bayou, winners of the 1m 2010 Junior SA Championships (photograph courtesy of T&B Images)

Alexander Peternell Clinics: Fourways Riding Centre November / December 2010

For those of you who are not acquainted with Alex, he is a born and bred “Gautenger” who relocated to the Europe when he was 18 to pursue his riding career. Just over ten years later, Alex lives with his wife, Grand Prix dressage rider, Alice Peternell, and owns and manages a yard of sixty horses in the England. Despite his relative youth, Alex has established himself as a force to be reckoned with on the European eventing circuit and last year he became the

first South African to have received invitations to, and competed in, both Burghley and Badminton. In the former, Alex rode into a very credible 36th place out of 80 invitees and in the latter he placed 38th, despite carrying an injury which meant that he could hardly ride at all for the entire month before the event. Circumstances beyond his control meant that he missed out on WEG. When he realized that this was not going to be his Games, he focused his attention on coming to SA and meeting our eventing crowd.

Whilst Alex is fairly soft-spoken and unassuming outside the arena, once he has his instructor's hat on, the transformation is staggering and he becomes a veritable task-master! What surprised everyone; was the exceptionally high standards he set, both with regard to the basics and the more technical and challenging work. The insights imparted in his clinics are too numerous to mention here, below is a brief summary of the most salient points that people who attended his clinics took away with them:

- “Practice does not make perfect. Practice makes permanent”. If you ride incorrectly, even for a few minutes, the bad habits will become entrenched.
- A good consistent warm-up is of vital importance. Insist that your horse works on a good contact from the moment that you mount.
- Ensure that your horse is in front of your leg, focussed and listening to you before you complete your warm-up. You can do this by riding transitions and riding at different tempos within each pace.
- Bold forward riding, rhythm and impulsion are essential. If you are riding forward with impulsion, it does not matter if you are on the wrong leg or are on an incorrect stride, your horse will be in a far better position to make a plan.
- A horse makes up his mind how he will jump an obstacle three strides before the obstacle. In many circumstances interfering by shortening your reins, pulling and/or kicking will serve to distract your horse from doing his job and will make the situation worse, not better.
- Always ride as if you are riding in a competition. When practising, do not ride a circle or pull-up if your approach to an obstacle is wrong or you are on the incorrect leg. These things will happen to you in a competition and you and your horse needs to learn in the practice arena how to get out of trouble.
- The principle of “object fixation”. Focus (fixate) on the next obstacle as early as possible. This should automatically shift your weight into the correct position and will allow your horse to know where he is going next.
- When jumping an obstacle for the first time, do not show it to your horse in advance. You need to build his confidence with jumping obstacles that he has never seen before, as this is what will happen in a competition scenario.
- Continue on straight after a gymnastics line and halt. This will teach your horse not to anticipate the direction in which he must go and will teach him to continue to listen to your commands after the jump.

- Whenever you are not jumping, ride with your dressage saddle, this will improve your riding position.
- Regular track work is necessary in order to improve his speed and stamina, especially for horses that have never raced previously.

Many thanks must go to Marion Clough for allowing Alex to use her wonderful venue at Fourways Riding Centre.

Lucinda Green's Clinics: Le Godimo / November 2010

Lucinda Green is indisputably one of Great Britain's most successful and respected eventers of all time. Whilst she needs no introduction, many of you may not be aware of the true extent of her successes on her wonderful horses, Be Fair, Beagle Bay, Reagal Realm, Wideawake and George. Her accolades are too many to include but her major achievements include winning the Burghley Horse Trials on two occasions and the world famous Badminton Horse Trials an incredible six times. In addition, she has competed at numerous World Championships and represented Great Britain at two Olympic Games. Lucinda came to RSA ten years ago and held several clinics, which were, by all accounts, excellent. She is a wonderful, enthusiastic, approachable person who has no qualms about imparting her extensive knowledge. It was thus with great anticipation that the SA Eventers welcomed this eventing great to Le Godimo in November.

In consummate contrast to Alex's clinics, where the obstacles were absolutely built to size (and higher!), Lucinda made use of what were, by all accounts, tiny obstacles which she made the riders ride at a walk or a trot. Whilst the riders initially thought that she had gone batty, as the lesson progressed it became completely apparent that there was indeed method in her madness!

The first exercise was a gymnastic-type exercise with skinnies, an arrowhead and a St Andrews on different lines, followed by a halt. Lucinda explained the rationale behind this work – in her view, the RSA riders are approaching their fences much faster than anywhere else in the world with the result that the horses were not locking in and focusing on the fences early enough.

The next line was skinny, 1 stride skinny, bounce over a skinny at about a 70 degree angle then back to a walk, roll back to the barrel out of a walk and kick on to make the stride to the arrowhead. As Roderick Nixon related, "the horses went in too fast, jumped too big and landed too deep to make the bounce. The horses weren't being shown the fence early enough and with enough time to make the line." Lucinda's first point exactly.

Other pertinent points that Lucinda raised, include the following:

- Ensure that you have a good well-fitting saddle suitable for eventing;
- RSA riders need to learn to sit slightly more behind the movement with our legs further forward as this is a safer seat;
- When they are close to an obstacle, horses use the top of their eyes to focus and therefore lower their heads sometimes pulling a rider too far forward. Practice letting your reins slip through your fingers and ride into a fence on a long rein – this will teach you how to maintain straightness and a contact on a long rein and will assist you with adopting a “safety seat” where you are using your seat and knees to guide your horse through a complex;
- Halt for ten seconds every time you finish a line, this will teach your horse obedience and will maintain his focus;
- Don’t neglect work over small jumps with technical lines and unrelated distances, this will improve your horse’s problem-solving capabilities and his confidence as the obstacles are small;
- Allow your horse to stretch down to give him an opportunity to see obstacle.

All in all, Lucinda’s clinics provided excellent insight into how important it is to master the basics and how good horsemanship will contribute greatly towards your horse’s performance.

Many thanks to Louise and Maarten and all the helpers for arranging Lucinda’s visit and hosting her at their home, as well as providing such wonderful facilities for us riders!

Thanks and Notices

The GHS eventing committee would like to extend their appreciation to Francois Viljoen for the very generous donation of his time and skills to revamp the interior of our newly acquired show office caravan! It looks awesome and there are still lots more additions to come! –
THANK YOU!

All those that have offered themselves for the development programme that Colin Hallaby is running with, please be patient, he will be contacting you shortly to proceed. GHS as a whole have requested that we “dove tail” and go forward and this has taken a little longer than anticipated. Expect to be contacted within the next month or two.

Upcoming Events

5-6th February: Le Godimo 70cm, 80cm, 90cm, 1m & 1*

19-20th March: ICB 80cm, 90cm, 1m series

2-3 April: Northern Farms 70cm, 80cm, 90cm, 1m

Admin!

FEI Registration: Anyone wanting to register with the FEI can do so by contacting SANEF.

Contact Details: Please do not forget to update your contact details with GHS Eventing.

Database: Should you want to add new requests to the database, please e-mail your request to: eventing@ghsinfo.co.za.

Contributions to the newsletter would be much appreciated! Please contact me at sarah@hadeco.co.za should you be interested in assisting in any way.

Until Next time – Happy Riding!