

Dressage WA Newsletter

MAY 2016

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The State Dressage Champions are on! Although it looks to be a busy weekend take some time to really watch your peers in action. This event is a good indication of the growth of dressage in WA and it is a great opportunity to network and become more involved.

In this edition we meet Jane McReady and DWA Committee Member Marjory Stanger. Would you like to add something to the newsletter? Contact us at www.dressagewa.org.

Message from the DWA Chair - Gill Botten

As I write this we are on countdown to the 2016 State Dressage Championships and it is great to see we have over 450 tests being ridden!

The Working Party that was formed this year to organize the Championships has worked very hard and professionally and we hope to give riders, sponsors, spectators, officials and owners an enjoyable weekend of competition.

We are hoping the only variable left to fate is the weather, which we trust will be favourable! There will be a trade hub area as well as interactive booths this year and Saturday night will showcase our top riders with the FEI freestyles, so do come and enjoy the weekend.

At last the grass is through and rain has come - I have noticed horses looking (and feeling) very fresh with glossy coats and some getting more rotund than they should! I know how they feel as surely this is the time of year when we head for the fire, a glass of red wine and copious amounts of chocolate!

I wish all involved a wonderful weekend on the 7th and 8th May and whether riders win, place or compete, may it be a great experience for all horses and riders.

Thought for the month:

"An owner might read a hundred books or go to dozens of teachers but if it is not within his capacity to "feel" for his horse, he will not succeed because his horse will know."

Leonie Marshall. 1996. "Your Horse's Mind" The Crowood Press, England

Gill Botten (Chair DWA)

Dressage Western Australia Committee Members

Chair - Gill Botten Vice Chair - Dwight Pedlow Treasurer - Dinah Fleming

Finance/Treasury - Dinah Fleming DWA budget management, DDF accounts, purchase orders and payments

Issue of Information – Rebecca DeVries

Website and Facebook

Correspondence - Gill Botten/Jo Yacopetti

Minutes, Agendas, incoming and outgoing correspondence.

Business/Strategic Planning - Dwight Pedlow

Sponsorship – Rebecca De Vries **Events** – Working Parties

Club Liaison – Marjory Stanger

Pony Representative – Steph Munro

Official Liaison - Elaine Greene Judges, Stewards, liaising with other disciplines, national issues.

High Performance - Gill Botten

EA/EWA - Gill Botten

liaising with EWA Board and CEO, ADC etc.

Riders Representative - Tracy Spackman

Includes downgrading applications, Rider's forum etc.

Performance Trophies/Awards – Dwight Pedlow/Val Mayger

DWA Newsletter - Suzanne Simons

Para Equestrian – Val Mayger

Young and Junior Rider Rep – Natalie

Sakich/Steph Munro

Meet dressage rider Jane McReady

Jane and Tourist have been together for a long time and were competing and training medium/advanced. They've had an emotional journey and, as is life with horses, have had to make some difficult decisions. However, Jane is very dedicated to her riding and makes the best of the current situation.

Tell us about Tourist - My current competition horse is Tourist (aka Charlie) he is a grey Percheron/tbred and



17 hh. He has not always been easy and has a strong opinion on certain things, so much so he has brought out every conceivable emotion that I have. One of them being guilt, as eventually we discovered that he been suffering from arthritis in the hocks and a gut issue. Both these issues were managed but of course at times there is still residual memory association in competition.

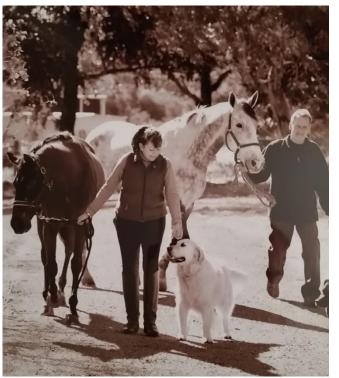
How did you start out in riding and dressage? I first started riding in England at about 7 years of age. My mum took my sister and I to "Mrs Burnhams" Riding School once a week and I rode a Dartmoor pony called Blackie. He kept pulling me out of the saddle when he saw a blade of grass as his neck was mighty and I had skinny arms and absolutely no core - the solution was grass reins. I loved Blackie after that.

I graduated onto an Exmoor pony called Bumble and then not long after that we immigrated to Australia and I was devastated. A year after arriving we moved to New Norcia to manage the Roadhouse - extreme culture shock! Dad thought it would be good for my sister and I to have our own ponies as there was a bit of land so my first pony was an unbroken Brumbie who was on the way down to Perth to be slaughtered. Not ideal for a first pony but I was in love and named her Gypsy and once she was broken in by the local vet I joined Yerecoin Pony Club for a short time.

Who is your biggest influence? In my adult riding life my first biggest influence was Jeannie Gardner. I and some lessons at Wyandra Riding School with her and learnt so much. I loved the way she taught. I enrolled in the Equine Management Course at Bentley TAFE in 1984 and Zoe Harrison was the lecturer. I was in heaven, learning everything horsey amongst likeminded people and having a lecturer who knew so much. Later I was offered a part time job with Zoe which also included keeping my horse there so it was an absolute win-win situation. I was riding western but learnt so much during that time looking after Zoes competition horses that I decided to switch to dressage but the correct training of horses in all disciplines is the same. Zoe has been a huge influence in my life of horses and look back at the times when a group of us would get together and discuss and dissect the art of dressage - it was fun and exciting.

My third biggest influence and the most influential on my understanding of how to really train a horse, was Edgar Lichtwark. All I can say is he gave me wings! He is sorely missed by quite a large group of us and I don't think anyone will be able to fill his place for me.

My current instructor is Ron Patterson who I have been going to for about one and half years. He has such a good eye and has helped me so much with my attention to detail. I sometimes get carried away and am enjoying the feel so much that I am not aware of my line. I also over ride and get too enthusiastic with my position and he gives me the boundaries to work in and chooses the right words to get through to me.



What are your riding goals? About 10 years ago I was diagnosed with Rhuematoid Arthritis. I had been feeling unwell for sometime and very fatigued but no one seemed to know what was wrong except that I had an immune response going on after bloods were taken. Eventually the joints in my hands were swelling and very sore and then more tests were done to show RA. I was so worried that I wouldn't be able to do the sport of dressage that I love. The chemotherapy drug helped to a certain degree but I would continually get "flares" in my large joints which were extremely painful - sometimes after I had ridden at a competition or clinic I could feel a flare coming on in a joint and I would have to rush home before I couldn't drive. My friends at Gidgegannup Dressage Club helped me so much during this time by looking after Charlie and I by taking his gear off, packing away all the stuff so I could get home.

I then qualified for a wonder drug which I inject once a fortnight. It is paid for by the Health Department which I am so grateful for, as it costs \$27,000.00 per year which I could definitely not afford. The drug allows me to



continue riding and being involved in the sport I love.

Up until 3 weeks ago, Charlie was training at Advanced, flying changes in place and starting to really sit in the canter and shows a liking for short steps but unfortunately Charlie's arthritis has worsened a great deal and I have decided to retire him from competition at this point in time. It is very ironic that we both suffer the same health issues and I know myself how important it is to keep the joints moving and muscles strong but not to over stress joints. We will continue to do light gymnastic work and riding out, my arthritic friend and I. Obviously I am devastated and sad that his career has ended at 14 years of age but the following saying says it for me at the moment

"When you can't change the direction of the wind-adjust your sails" H. Jackson Brown Jr.

How could dressage in WA be improved? I would like to see more freestyles, similar to the Europa Freestyle Championships in the old days. Prize money should be good to attract people and make them competitive. The same for the participants, they should have their own competitions. Freestyles can bring in spectators but I feel that WA dressage riders find them a waste of time but in Europe they are huge. We just need to find a good sponsor.

Future of Pony Dressage secure in WA

By Dinah Fleming



Dressage WA has played a vital role in securing the future of Pony Dressage in WA, successfully lobbying the Board of Equestrian WA to mandate a state rule preserving separate competitive pony classes at all official competitions.

The move was spurred by a change to the National Dressage Rules introduced by Equestrian Australia in 2016. This rule change gave organising committees the option to run horses and ponies together in competitive classes and score and place them together, when previously they had to be separated for places and prize-giving.

Pony Dressage has been growing at a rapid rate in recent years. Four years ago the State Dressage Championships attracted less than 10 pony competitors. In 2015 there were 25 ponies in the preliminary and novice classes and EWA issued 68 Pony Dressage cards, and this number is expected to be higher in 2016.

Equestrian Australia's national rule change sparked concern from a small but passionate group of West Australian pony riders, trainers, coaches and breeders who believed it could have a devastating effect on the sport of Dressage in our state.

In particular, the group was concerned that putting horses and ponies in the same class would discourage pony riders from competing, especially the younger riders who were starting to explore the discipline of dressage. They also predicted it would have financial implications for EWA and the sport as a whole, as people riding ponies would be likely to drift away to other sports or give up competing altogether.

After speaking to others breeding, training and competing ponies, this committed group then developed a well-informed submission summarising their concerns for DWA and seeking support for a state rule. In addition, they asked DWA to lobby for a reversal of the rule change.

This submission was unanimously supported by DWA and, in turn, referred to the Board of EWA. Having now supported our recommendation for a state rule which requires all competitions to offer separate Pony Dressage classes for Competitive members, the Board has also agreed to raise the issues relating to Pony Dressage with the Australian Dressage Committee with a view to reversing the rule change. Dressage WA looks forward to hearing the result of EWA's discussions with the ADC.

WA Judges at Sydney CDI (6 -9 April 2016)

By Liz Watkins



Brett Parbery and Lorenso

Once again I undertook my annual pilgrimage to the Sydney CDI - both as a rider and a judge I find this a great experience. Also at the event were other WA judges Kim Thomas, Gill Botten, Sara Botten, Elaine Greene and Virginia Longley. I was fortunate to be the judge writer for Maribel Alonso de Quinzanos in the GP CDN and under 25 GP. I also wrote in the Under 25 for Rafael Saleh (FRA) who I also wrote for at the 2015 CDI.

It is always a great experience to write for judges and that is heightened when they are also judging at the Rio Olympics this year. Maribel was a very kind and fair judge who was keen to give out higher marks, however, riders threw a lot of marks away by not preparing the horse on the short side for the upcoming movement and Maribel really watched the horse on the short side and commented regarding collection and engagement not being good enough before the movement. Maribel also felt many riders were not accurate enough with the placement of transitions, particularly in coming back from the extended paces to collection – taking too many metres to collect.

The Saturday night freestyles were entertaining and it was a treat to see Brett Parbery and Lorenso win the Inter 1 freestyle and also Small Tour Champion. His test was exciting with so much expression and cadence in the work.

Notes on the International judges workshop with Gary Rockwell (USA) and Maribel Alonso de Quinzanos (MEX)

The workshop on the Sunday was well attended by judges, riders and coaches. Mr Rockwell began by summarizing the changes USA have made to the National tests. Here are some of them:

Novice: shorter diagonals for lengthening

Elementary: removing the counter canter serpentine

renver going into the medium tests

moving the turn on the haunches in off track

Medium: removing the half pass to centre line then flying change

Advanced: ¼ canter pirouette as a starting point

removing the counter canter through the short side and change at C

schaukel back (not sure if this was to go into PSG or Advanced)

The guest riders for the first section were two of the young horse champions from the day before: Rodney Martin and SPH Renaissance and Gordon Pratt and Bloomers Simply the Best. Both horses worked really well for Gary and Maribel – working on the balance and suppleness in the shoulder in and half passes. Rockwell asked Pratt to lower the horses neck from the base as he had a naturally high set neck and carriage which he felt was slightly blocking the horse's suppleness.

Deon Stokes, who won the Advanced Freestyle on Don Dancier by quite a margin, came in and rode through the test which was also marked by the judges present. Gary then asked Stokes to work on the walk pirouettes – commenting that many of the tests he had judged over the weekend featured poor pirouettes (this comment was not directed at Deon). He specifically felt that many riders had thrown away marks by the lack of straightness (with shoulder fore attitude) in the steps prior and also the slowing of the walk tempo. He coached Deon through several pirouettes, making adjustments to the above issues and the already correct pirouettes improved visibly.

Gary also asked Deon (and Gordon in the previous session) to ride shoulder in and half passes and made the following suggestions:

- Ride more up than forward
- o Bump the inside leg at the girth for more engagement
- o Think of many small steps rather than trying to go too much sideways with big steps, this allows the horse to come under and keep balanced.

Young rider Mary Warren came in on her Grand Prix horse and immediately Gary asked her to ride him with more energy and not in such a long open frame, commenting that he really liked being there so she should ride him more up and in a quicker tempo from the beginning of the warm up – in an elementary frame. Rockwell then proceeded to improve the general energy and activity of the trot and canter. He felt the horse was always a little slow – both in the hind legs and in his response to the rider's aids. One of his favorite comments was "no fluffy transitions" and the rider must "insist on coming back to the original collected trot after medium/extended trot". Rockwell worked on the quality of the tempi changes – encouraging the rider to look up to a point above the diagonal line and ride the horse uphill before during and after the changes.

This was a great workshop from a riding and judging perspective and well worth attending.



Presentation of the Inter 1 freestyle and Small Tour Champion

Notes by FEI 4* Judge Maria Schwennesen at the Gary Rockwell and Maribel Alonso de Quinzanos Clinic - Sydney 10 April 2016

- Trot should be like a metronome can be faster, slower, higher or lower, shorter or longer but always the same equal rhythm.
- Lateral work is our friend as it is the most important tool for the development of collection
- Bending on equal sides. Horses tilt against their stiffer rein. No accepting the vertical roundness on the outside rein. Bring the nose towards the wall, gain outside roundness by lowering the outside rein and away with the inside rein....
- Submission dictionary description is giving in to a higher power not right for dressage. Should be willing co-operation

Question - how do you assess a big 4 year old horse with huge gaits?

Answer - Big ones generally go a little slower. A big horse will not have a collected trot the same as a pony collected trot, has to find their balance, don't do too much to compress the bigger horses. Allow the movements to collect the horse. They must find the balance themselves, the riders must be willing to give them more time. A 6 year old horse should have developed more balance and carry the weight to the hindquarters. More power and self carriage.

Tips

- > Don't forget the pace mark there must be the scope also in the paces.
- > Remember to reward the good parts of the movements, not just to keep focus on the problems. We are quality controllers.
- Extended Trot and Canter most points lost over the weekend was extensions not ridden right to the end. What about the transitions mark? Fading away around quarter line.

Half Passes



- Never take your eyes off the letter you are heading, horses should also be looking towards the letter.
- The more horses go sideways the less they lift up from the forehand.
- When leading, the forehand is going to drop, has to stay in the channel of energy.

- Try to get power without going forward
- Take time to build the power
- Canter HP don't let the horse go too much to the side
- Keep the canter quick

Shoulder In



- Don't think about pushing horse to the side
- Think about controlling each step

Walk Pirouettes

- Don't try to move the horse sideways
- Move the girth to the side.
- The forehand must be leading
- Keep shorter reins, hand position matching
- Pick your walk and then keep it the same through the pirouette

Question - if you look too much to the inside, doesn't this take the horse too much sideways?

Answer - Generally if you look to the side, our weight goes that way which is what we want

The most common problem - The riders usually don't associate the walk quality with the pirouette. The walk has to be the most important thing. Nothing should change with the walk, this is the most common problem.

The inside shoulder should not be back as this only takes the weight to the outside. Shoulders in line with the horse's shoulders.





- The mistakes in the sequence changes were all made because the canter was not correct through the corner before the sequence.
- Never correct a flying change with another flying change or you will nearly always get a third one.
- It is always about the balance before the first change
- Croup high changes the balancing step has to be effective before the change, activity.
- Riders remain relaxed in your body

Canter Pirouettes



- In preparation keep the canter quick and small
- Look into the way of the pirouette
- Wait for the preparation to work completely before starting

Quotes

"On the bit has to be the most comfortable place to be for both horse and rider"

"Use positive reward"

"Keep the collected canter quick and short, often it should feel a little uncomfortably quick"

"When starting the collected canter don't fail the horse by starting with a big walk, collect it first"

"Riders look ahead, that's where horses go"

"Add something, don't subtract"

"Let go, let go, do less"

"Passage should not be slower"

"Passage to piaffe to passage, it is important the horse thinks about the trot rhythm first"

"Keep horse sharp to the light aids, always more response"

.....

Question -What is the difference in the piaffe to passage aid?

Answer - The aid for passage is the same as for the trot, the purpose of the seat is not to propel but whether we want short or long steps. My seat swings to dictate the length of steps. For longer trot, increase rider swing and allow with the rein, for piaffe it is less swing in the seat. The horse has to learn, what does our upper body want to say?

Corrections

- Riders must have a plan for corrections in a test that works quickly
- The horse must be confident in their corrections
- Riders must know and train the horse in these corrections
- E.g. horse breaks from the canter to the trot a few steps walk then canter again.
- No panicking.

Hand Position Neck • When you have flat hands, the rein becomes • Raising or lowering the neck, the whole front end indirect. must be lightened when the neck comes up, Lowering the neck to allow the engagement of • Thumbs should be pointed to the opposite ear. the hind legs to produce the cadence and • Closed fists like punching people. lightness • Hand position should always be matching. **Ride Position Reins** • If you don't have the inside rein on the horses • To correct head forward, think of bringing your neck, the horse is not on the bit. neck back against your collar, not just head up. • The directory outside rein is to stop the horse from • Relax your arms, joints should be soft and flexible falling out.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

STATE DRESSAGE CHAMPIONSHIPS

May 7th-8th 2016



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The Animal Hospital

At Murdoch University

24H EMERGENCY

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GEAR CHECK

Refer to Rule 1.11 of the 2016 EA Dressage Rules:

- (a) a gear check is required for each dressage test;
- (b) all competitors must present to the gear steward;
- (c) it is recommended that the gear check is undertaken prior to each test;
- (d) failure to have a gear check may incur elimination.

Competitiors please note the following:

- Remove all boots and bandages from your horse before presenting for a gear check.
- Please do not ask the gear steward to alter any of your equipment, or tighten your girth, etc.
- Be attentive and considerate to the Event Officials. They are there to ensure a fair and equal playing field for all competitors.

PATTERNED" RIDING BOOTS ARE "NOT PERMITTED" IN DRESSAGE

Refer to Section 2.3(d) of the 2016 EA Dressage Rules. If such boots are worn in the competition arena, a penalty of 2 points will be deducted by each judge.





WHIPS – Refer to Rule 2.6 of the 2016 EA Dressage Rules

- Riders of horses may carry one whip up to 1.2 metres (120cm) including the tassel.
- Riders of ponies may carry one whip up to 1 metre (100cm) including the tassel.
- For any horse/pony, one whip as specified above, may be carried and used:
 - In the exercise and warm-up areas;
 - In all tests up to and including Advanced level at all events including Championships;
 - By a rider anywhere on the ground when riding or leading a horse/pony;
 - By other parties, providing that it is not used in connection with training a horse/pony.

THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

Whips - FEI Competitors (PSG to Grand Prix) at State Championships

- Refer to Rule 2.6, Table 2.12, and Annexure G of the 2016 EA Dressage Rules:
- One whip can be used in the exercise and warm-up areas at the State Championships, but not as follows:
 - Entering the space around the arena with a whip a penalty of 2 points deducted from each judge;
 - Entering the dressage arena with a whip a penalty of 2 points deducted from each judge;
 - Carrying a whip in a test for more than three movements will entail elimination.



- Arena Familiarisation will be held for the Indoor Arena and the International Arena on the Saturday and Sunday mornings of the WA State Championships. Exact timing will be as advised by the Organising Committee (OC).
- The Steward/Official dictates the direction and pace of the arena familiarisation.
- Stallions must wear their green stallion discs.
- All horses must have their ID numbers clearly displayed.
- No horse will be permitted inside the actual competition arena the arena familiarisation will be on the outside of the arena surrounds only.

No Number - No Ride!

It is strongly recommended that you have a spare set of bridle numbers for your horse in case you lose one or both of your ID numbers at the Event. Your horse's ID number needs to be clearly displayed on the horse at all times when the horse is out of the stable (this includes arena familiarisation, competing, exercising, lunging, the wash bay, swabbing, grazing, tied to the float, etc.).

Identification Papers

Swabbing will be undertaken at the State Championships. All competitors are required to have at hand their horse's EA registration papers so that easy identification can be made by the attending veterinarian. If you are a Participant competitor and have breed papers or a height certificate for your horse, then either of these documents will suffice for the purposes of horse identification. If no identification papers are available for the horse, then the veterinarian will complete an ID form at the time of swabbing.

Meet Committee Member Marjory Stanger

Meet Marjory. She's the Club Liaison and joined the DWA committee in February 2016. She's been an active member of Gidgegannup Dressage Club and was secretary for 2 years and president for 5 years, so brings a lot of experience to the DWA committee.



As a child growing up on an island in Scotland I didn't have any opportunity for trained riding so it was just a case of hop on a Shetland pony, stay on until it dumped me, get up remount and the same thing over again.

My husband and I moved to Australia, had children and the chance to ride didn't arise again until we moved to Stoneville and there was an empty paddock and my yearning for a horse grew. In 1999, being very naïve, I bought a 16hh chestnut, thoroughbred mare. She was lovely but a bit hot. I attended Zamia Adult Riding club for 5 years, trying our hand at eventing which was very exciting but unfortunately due to the pressure of racing, I retired her at 19 and she is still with me at the of age

of 29. Then in 2004 I bought Barney, another thoroughbred and joined Gidgegannup Dressage Club and discovered there is a lot more to dressage than just riding around in 20 metre circles. Barney and I learned a lot together and managed to compete at associate medium which was a huge feat as neither of us initially had a clue about how to execute a flying change.

At the moment I am riding Springwood Renowned, aka Ren, who is a 17.3 hh warmblood by Regardez Moi. Although he can get a bit jolly at times he is generally a gentle giant and fun to have around. At present I am an active member of Gidgegannup Dressage Club and was secretary for 2 years and president for 5, as well as coordinating our competitions. I am a firm believer that if you are a member of a club it is good to give back by helping out where possible. Over the years I have had so much assistance with horsemanship and riding from some fantastic coaches, made lots of new friends and had the support of my husband, Jim.



Transitions Dressage Day – 10th April 2016 By Marian Semones Photos by Waylib Photos

The Sunday of TRANSITIONS DRESSAGE DAY, 10th April, was a blustery, grey old day, but thank goodness the thunder and rain stayed North of the City and just left us with strong winds that blew down arenas, eventually left lying flat on the grass. There was a total of 118 entries: 89 Competitor which included 16 Dressage Ponies & 6 FEI Tests and there were 29 Participant entries. Horses and riders coped really well in the conditions. Steph Spencer riding Dolce (owned by Heidi Emery) blasted down the centre line as the wind blew a gale, to complete a wonderful Novice 2:3 test with a final score of 78.534% and took the win in a very classy competition field. Our own club President, Marjorie Radford riding her very exciting 5yr old, Felice De Jeu, coped well with the wind and like a real "Pro" won the Prelim. 1:3 class with 71.717% and a very close 2nd to Dolce in the Novice 2:3 on 76.897.

Other outstanding scores were produced by Kristina Suiter and her lovely pony Boohill Bond 24 receiving 69.375% in the Elementary 3:3 Dressage Pony class, just beating the Elementary Open score of 69.313% ridden by Emma Hayward on Ann Gasiorowski's RiverNDell Solitaire. FEI tests through to GP were offered

with Nadine Herbert winning the PSG, Steph Spencer and Redskin R the Inter 1 with 71.118% showing they are ready for this level. Colin Chantler and Bonita rode the GP with a result of 65.200%. Well done all.

Feedback from riders was positive and encouraging. With the State Dressage Championships only 3 weeks away, they turned out for a trial run. EA National Dressage Steward, Janet Reid, was very complimentary about the efforts of the Organising Committee to provide a safe environment for horses, riders and the public. A "corridor of cones" separated the competition arenas from the warm-up areas, and the public



were restricted to areas on the perimeter of the oval. Only Officials wearing high visibility vests were permitted access to the "corridor", or to any part of the oval that was being used by riders.

This innovative corridor was put in place by Ken Heath, a member of Transitions, who is very keen to follow the guidelines of Equestrian Australia in Risk Assessment and Risk Management for all Events held by the Club. Additionally, Janet was very impressed with Club Volunteers who performed gear-checking and marshalling for the event. Janet said that

their sound knowledge and helpful attitude was exemplary, and she was hopeful that they would seek National Accreditation as EA Dressage Stewards.

This event winds up the season for Transitions, which doesn't start again until September. Its been an exciting season for the Club, especially with the Stephen Clarke Young Rider Classic held in November last year, a successful event in December 2015 and a very successful Unofficial Dressage Day in March this year. A big thank you to all our amazing judges that are so supportive of the Club. Dressage Days can't run without you.





Sharon Pasco and Whot Not

Michelle Horsfall and My Ophelia





Mia Fleckhammer and Beelo-Bi Toorak



Gillian Wibberley and Triplicate



Marjorie Radford and Felice De Jeu





Left - Kristi Suiter and T.D. Money Penny, Left middle – Courtney Crockhart and Bellingara Florencio, Top right – Colin Chantler and Bonita









Left – Megan Knyn and Tudor Royale, above - Louise Goundry and Overflow Nindawarri

Eastern Wheatbelt Riding Club: Dust and Diamonds Dressage Summer Series

By Emma Crofts Photos by Nicole Lockyer







Top to bottom – Tracey Lane and Almirante, Patricia Findlay and Djurre Fan Friso, Jess Joy and Callum

Dressage in the Wheatbelt is a partnership between Kellerberrin Riding & Pony Club and Eastern Wheatbelt Riding Club to promote the sport of dressage in the Wheatbelt region of WA. The initiative hosts two events – a dressage gala competition in September and a summer training series from December to February.

The 2015/16 Dust & Diamonds Dressage Summer Series started on December 19th, with events running fortnightly until the finale on February 13th. A total of 180 tests were entered over the five dates, with riders travelling from the Perth metropolitan, Hills, Avon and Wheatbelt regions. Training tests were offered from Preparatory to Elementary, with a 6am start to beat the heat. Many riders chose to camp the night before, and the atmosphere at the local sports club over dinner each fortnight was fantastic. Dressage in the Wheatbelt strives to offer an environment that is supportive, inclusive and encouraging for riders of all ages and abilities.

Everyone was presented with a completion ribbon at the fortnightly events, and winners of each test on the day were awarded bags of carrots provided by the Kellerberrin Farmers Co-op. Test scores were added up throughout the series, and winners in each presented with age group were beautiful saddleblankets at the finale. These prizes were provided by our generous sponsors; Tasma Scanlan at Precision Pilates & Equestrian, Emily Lucas at Punky Ponies Browbands, Cathy Campbell at The Tartan Tucker Box Co., Nicole Lockyer at Nicole Lockyer Photography and Rose Bowen at Rose's Rug Repairs.

Dressage in the Wheatbelt was recently a successful applicant in the CBH Group Grass Roots Fund, which, teamed with funds raised from entries to our events, means that we have purchased two brand new dressage arenas. The debut of our new arenas will be at Crystals in Kellerberrin - A Day of Dressage in the Wheatbelt on 17th September. The event provides competition tests for PCAWA, EA Competitive and Participant and Open riders. There are fantastic prizes rosettes to fourth place, photographers, gourmet catering and trade stands. The whole event is held on the lush green grass of the Kellerberrin Greater Sports Ground, just two hours east of Midland. Camping facilities, excellent yards and hot meals are available at the grounds. Like 'Dressage in the Wheatbelt' on Facebook to keep up to date.

Riders' Forum By Gill Botten and Steph Munro Photos by Rebecca De Vries



The Riders' Forum, organized by the Dressage WA Riders' Representative, Tracy Spackman, took place at Horseland Midland on Tuesday 19th of April. Horseland not only allowed us to utilise their store for the event but also generously donated a gift with every purchase throughout the duration of the event.

The evening commenced with a presentation by Harry Boldt detailing his amazing career and achievements with horses as well as a reflection on dressage in Western Australia. As a dressage rider over three decades, winning two team gold and two individual silver medals at Olympic Games and several more at World and European Championships, he had a lot of stories to offer from the perspective of a rider as well as in his experience as

a coach under whom, as national coach, his riders won fifty gold medals.

The forum was extremely well attended, with 45 people in attendance, with Ron Fleming acting as facilitator. Questions spanned a number of different topics relating to both riders and event organisation. In particular the Dressage Development Fund (DDF) and its associated expenditure both in the past and moving forward were discussed. A breakdown of the current grant system is available on the DWA website.

The limitations of the participant pathway in Western Australia were also raised. Riders cannot currently compete above Novice in participant classes in Australia, which at the meeting was linked to declining engagement, volunteer numbers and dressage membership. The Australian Dressage Committee is considering adding Elementary for Participants, and the forum reaffirmed DWA's support for this change.

Robust discussion of each question was undertaken with a resolution or rephrased question put to DWA for discussion at their next meeting. Many of the questions related to EA and not DWA and were taken to the board for discussion. The minutes of the forum and any solutions will be published at a later date, and personalised responses to specific questions will be sent out.

The meeting was very productive and it is proposed to run another such event between the State Championships and the Master Series final. A Regional Riders' Forum has also been provisionally scheduled to take place at Horseland Bunbury, date yet to be released. DWA recognises that the communication between riders, organisers, judges, coaches and the committee is very important in shaping dressage in WA.

