

Dressage WA Newsletter

December 2016

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The year is finally over and what a great year for dressage it has been. There were so many fantastic learning opportunities with international presenters, Eastern States judges, not to mention an abundance of dressage competitions. Let's see what 2017 brings but make sure you get involved!

In this edition we meet Amy Ross. Do you have a great idea for the newsletter? Contact us at www.dressagewa.org.

Message from the DWA Chair - Gill Botten

It is unbelievable that we have reached December and the end of the season already! It has been a great year for dressage in WA. 2016 has seen some new organisers come forward to run competitions and riders have been very appreciative of these extra events. Whilst on this topic I would like to thank all our organisers who work tirelessly on a voluntary basis to provide many opportunities for our riders. I think because these people work so professionally, sometimes competitors are not aware that they do not get paid and often are doing all this work as well as stressful day jobs. A big "thank you" to them all and please make sure you thank them and respect their privacy by not bombarding them with emails, texts and phone calls at inappropriate times. Email is probably the most appropriate form of communication as then issues can be dealt with when organisers have time to respond. I'm sure most of you do this already but we need to support our organisers as without them there would be no competitions.

DWA and Taskforce are planning many events for 2017 and the details will be published in the New Year.

I would like to thank my very hardworking committee for all they have done this year. Not only do they work hard but also they do it in such a positive and cheerful way that makes working with them such a pleasure. Unfortunately we lose our Treasurer, Dinah Fleming, who has put in many years of hard work for DWA. Dinah now has many horses to ride and no longer has time to undertake the Treasurer's position. Thank you Dinah – we will miss you but hopefully we can call on your wealth of knowledge when necessary.

Quote for the month:
Harry Boldt writing on
the development of
dressage

"What has eventually triumphed is a concept of dressage which has at its very core the horse's natural movement and a humane approach to the animal"

"Harry Boldt. 2011. The Dressage Horse. Nverlag, Germany.

Gill Botten (Chair DWA)



Dressage Western Australia Committee Members

Chair - Gill Botten
Vice Chair – Tracy Spackman
Treasurer -

Finance/Treasury -

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 - TBA

Events – Working Parties

Club Liaison – Marjory Stanger

Pony Representative – Steph Munro

Participant Representative – Kate Baxter

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 –Val Mayger

DWA Newsletter - Suzanne Simons

Para Equestrian – Val Mayger

Young and Junior Rider Rep – Natalie Sakich/Steph Munro

Meet dressage rider Amy Ross

Amy and Ma Belle Ami have not been together for a long time but have already formed an impressive partnership.



Tell us about Ma Belle Ami

It's been a year and a half since I became the proud owner of Bella. She is 11 year old, 14.2 hh Anglo-Arab, with the personality of a small Beyonce; - talented, but with a lot of sass. We have recently moved up to Medium, which is what she was competing at with her previous owner when we bought her. When we went into the market to look for my next horse I was looking for an eventer, but I stumbled across Bella and my coach was determined she was the one. We flew to Canberra shortly after and made the purchase of the little black unicorn. She has been an absolute treasure, taking me from Preliminary to Medium in this time. She is a quirky little woman, with a very distinct personality. Under saddle she is in every way a small horse and the more you ask of her the happier and more obliging she gets. There is not much to not like about her. She is in every way a dream pony. The only time she displeases is when she decides she's not ready to come in from her paddock and then we see the classic pony attitude emerge.



What has been the key to her training?

The first year with Bel was mainly just getting her that bit softer and to relax through the poll. She was just very poll shy and it took me quite a while to get her to relax and for that I have to thank my most wonderful Bowen therapist, Anja Cherian. I think it was also very advantageous that B had to come back down to Novice to get me up to speed. This gave us time to get to know each other and allowed Bella to open up her frame again. However, B is a pony that loves her work and the more you give her to do, the more she willingly gives. Therefore, to get the most out of B we start with a lot of lateral work in walk, then get her forward in the canter before coming back to trot. I've found that walking down the road and up a mini hill before each schooling session really puts her in a good mind frame and she gets straight to her job when we get back in the arena. This year I've also competed Bella in three ODE's in the 65 cm class which she just absolutely loves. I just aim and shoot in the showjumping and hold on in the cross country. I do think getting her out in other disciplines just keeps her fresh and thinking so that she doesn't get stale on the dressage. B's strengths definitely lie in her expressive trot and her extended trots which she has way too much fun in. At current, keeping her soft in the walk and getting that bigger stride in the extended walk are definitely a thing to work on for next year. Her flying changes are still a combination of me getting to know ideal timings of aids, and for her, her changes from left to right. However, over the last few weeks we have had some clean and expressive changes which I'm very excited to bring out for 2017.



What are your riding goals?

My immediate goal is for next year to have our changes established so that we can bring our score up and start preparing for training Advanced. Throughout next year, I hope to travel over east with Deborah Ambrosini and compete in some Young Rider competitions. Even if that doesn't happen next year, I would still love to get the chance to have a go competing in a bigger atmosphere while I'm still able to ride in the Young Rider



classes. I would love to have a few rides at Advanced late next year, so that in 2018 we can have a good crack at advanced. My long term goal for Bella is to try get her to an FEI level. I believe she is capable and she is the perfect horse to learn the movements together on with her willing attitude. As for my own long term goal, I would love nothing more than to reach Grand Prix. Of course representing Australia is a fantasy that I would love to happen, however, I think that starting a horse and bringing it all the way through the levels to Grand Prix would be the most rewarding achievement and is something I want to do at some point in my riding career.

How did you start out in riding and dressage?

I have always had a passion for horses and had wanted to ride. However it wasn't until 2011 that I told my parents I wanted to be a vet for farm animals that my Dad allowed me to start taking riding lessons. I started at Zamalee Equestrian Centre with Sophie Jauffret and Leesa Evans, as a safety precaution for dealing with big animals. Of course 'safety precaution' lessons were not enough and I quickly changed my goal of becoming a vet when I was 'told vets don't have time to ride'. My first horse was not the ideal first horse at all and I quickly stole the recently purchased eventing school master, Archie, who was bought for my Dad. I spent that first year with Archie building my confidence before attending a few dressage competitions on him. Archie loved his eventing and so I competed him in a few small eventing classes before he went into retirement from age and old injuries. I had my sights set on another eventing school master, however my coach, Natalie Hibbert, knew me better and insisted that we look at dressage horses as well. After riding B it was hard not to love dressage. B was the perfect introduction to how dressage was supposed to be and gave me glimpses of more exciting movements still to come. Although I think eventing is absolutely awesome, I get my dosage from grooming for Nat and my best friend, Izzy. B is too talented in dressage and I love dressage and all it has to offer.

Who has been your greatest influence?

I'm very fortunate to have lots of people in my life that inspire me, which is a big influence on how I approach my riding and goals. However my biggest influence has to be my coach, Natalie Hibbert. I have been under Nat's guidance for the last 4 years, and I hope to be with her for many more years. Nat's influence extends past my riding, and horse management, into my personal life. I'm very fortunate to call her a friend, and she is to be credited for any successes I have had with riding.

Bella's previous owner, Annie Lorimer, located in Canberra, is definitely someone I look up to as well in my riding. Annie is one of the most dedicated young riders I know, and I was fortunate enough to spend a month living with her last year. This was perhaps the best thing I could have done, as I got insight into Annie's style of riding and Bella's previous home. Still to this day I regularly talk to her and seek advice with B's management. Annie is the perfect example of a rider that is kind and fair, while still being disciplined. Nat often says to me "find your inner Annie" whenever I encounter a problem with Bella. I hope to achieve the same level elegance and poise Annie has when riding.

Those are just two of the people in my life that influence my riding. Many of my fellow riders, however, are perfect examples of perseverance and dedication. I do not have to look far at all in my life for inspiration or how my riding has been influenced. However, most importantly would be my parents, who have supported my riding in every way possible, and none of what I have achieved, or hopefully still am to achieve, would be possible without them.

How could dressage in WA be improved?

I think that the recent change to a high point system is a wonderful move towards improving dressage in WA, as well as some wonderful clubs reemerging and putting on some very exciting competitions. As a pony rider, I would love to see more ponies coming through the levels and being acknowledged. In particular for championship competitions, if there are not enough pony competitors, perhaps combining horses and ponies, as done over East, would allow for the ponies to take a stand with the horses. However, WA is to be congratulated on hosting some absolutely wonderful competitions and there is no shortage of club organised competitions, which I think is a huge credit to the dressage clubs and all of the organisers of WA.



Project Neon FEI Showcase

By Jamie Bawden

Photos by Rebecca De Vries – Horseplay Photography



The second FEI Neon Showcase event was held on the 27th November at the Swan Valley Equestrian Park. It was a relaxed beautiful day and an early start, with two Grand prix riders in the morning and Hannie Byrne taking the win on Elouera Quixote.

In the Inter 1, Liz Tollarzo took out the win on Everton Park Jet Blauw D over Nadine Herbert on Fleurette. The PSG was hotly contested with 5 riders but again Liz Tollarzo took the win, with Sally Myall on Hollingrove Sunburst in second place and third place to Kjersti Grov in her very first PSG. Both Medium classes were won by Narelle Lange on Wandiera Rhapsody.

The day finished early, around lunch time, and ran smoothly despite a few little hiccups.

This event was designed to give FEI riders more opportunities to ride higher tests. Without the support of the major company sponsor **Project Neon** and Terrina Fairbrother, class sponsor **Lancaster Wines** and **Anytime Deli** the event would not have been possible.

Thank you also to Tracey Spackman, Dwight Pedlow, Val Mayger, and Suzanne Simons





Opposite page – Wendy Barker and Ellis Brook Hermes.
Clockwise – Sally Mayall and Hollingrove Sunburst, Taylah Welsh
and San Rubin II and Kjersti Grov and Kinnordy Rheingold



Left top to bottom – Anton Krulatz and Razino, Narelle Lange and Wandera Rhapsody, Liz Tollarzo and Everton Park Jet Blauw D. Top right Nadine Herbert and Fleurette. Bottom right - Gillian Wibberly and Triplicate



WA Riders Successful at the Australian National Dressage Championships

Terrina Fairbrother riding Savio H and Abisha

Competing at the National Dressage Championships has always been a bucket list item for me. Since 1998 I have groomed for other riders at Nationals, CDI's, CDIEP's, Paralympics and WEG's, driven across Australia with and without horses to help other riders get to these completions as well as being fortunate enough to fly with the Paralympic horses to Hong Kong in 2008. These opportunities gave me a tremendous insight to National and International competition and also a thirst to do it myself at some stage.

So it was with a great deal of excitement and trepidation that I entered the 2016 Australian National Dressage Championships. I had previously entered Savio H in the Sydney CDI but ten days before we were due to leave, Savio developed a non-healing ulcer on his right eye which required surgery. I had to scratch from the competition, and to be honest I think Savio didn't want to leave Abisha behind and quite possibly scratched his eye on purpose!

In my past trips I have travelled with the horses on Combined Horse Transport - which I believe now is not allowed. This experience showed be how wonderfully Combined treat ALL the horses on this long haul journey, the only slight problem is that once you arrive at your location you are dependent on others to move you and your horse about. I was always concerned when travelling with others that if something went wrong we had no way of taking our horse directly to a vet, farrier etc. So with that in mind I decided to drive my horses across Australia myself.

My husband Cameron is a keen hockey player. He is the coach of the Australian Men's Masters Hockey 55's team. His National Championships were on exactly when I needed to leave Perth! Coming with me not only meant he missed out on playing but also selecting his National Team - so it was an easy decision for him... he wasn't going to drive with me! I enlisted the help of Gavin Thomson. Gav's a very old friend - he used to be the stud manager at Mungrup Stud so knows horses, can drive (a big plus) and I know him well enough for us both to put up which each other's company for four days!

So the trip was planned, Plant Health Certificates sorted, stops organised, horses gear packed, my gear packed, Rusty Russell my Jack Russell all packed, vet kit packed and finally horses loaded into Esmay my Equitrek and off we went. Our first day was an easy day - some 9.5 hrs drive to Fraser Range Station. Fraser Range has the old quarantine yards when WA quarantine used to be in Norseman. They are a reasonable size, with a hose for water. Horses happily settled we enjoyed a meal before having an early night. The next day was to be a long one. 12 hours of driving and we would lose 2.5 hrs crossing the border into SA. So a 4.00am start was planned as we wanted to get to Ceduna early enough to hit the pub for tea! I'd previously lured Gav to come along with the promise of Ceduna oysters and King George Whiting for tea! We needed to get to the pub before it closed. The poor horses looked a little shell shocked at their early morning wakeup call! But most importantly they were both eating and drinking well and their temps correct.

One of the things you need to plan when travelling across Australia, especially the Nullabor, is fuel! Fortunately Esmay is very economical so I managed to not have to fill up on the Nullabor. We stopped twice during the 12hr day to refuel the horses - offering water (which they both drank bucket loads of!) and refilling hay nets. At Ceduna you must present at SA Quarantine. I'd been told stories of the inspectors searching the whole vehicle for things so was a little nervous of what to expect. I had a copy of my plant health certificate at the ready, some uneaten apples and carrots at the ready and braced to have Esmay searched. I needn't have bothered. The Inspectors took my apples (logically as fruit fly is a huge problem) accepted my plant health cert without even looking at my hay and left me with my carrots for the horses to have later! Easy!



Ceduna Racetrack has some super yards set up for horses traveling across Australia. A great size and they have access to plenty of fresh water and are super safe. We unloaded the horses and settled them in. Another 12 hr day faced us in the morning. Today's destination was Cabarita Lodge in Mildura. Another early start but with only 1/2 hr time difference a bit of a sleep in to 5am. I like to start early while the weather is cooler. Cars and trucks always run better in the cool and by getting to your destination early it allows the horses to settle in during daylight.

That day it was very hot - 39 degrees with 90km/h winds. Poor Esmay was buffered around in the wind. Savio was unhappy with the heat and wind and although he kept drinking he didn't eat much at all. We reached Mildura by 5.30 in the afternoon. By 7.00 Savio was showing signs of colic. Before leaving Perth, Michael Proctor of Oakford Equine Hospital had set me up with a vet kit.... just in case. I had so hoped I wouldn't need it. A local vet was called who drenched Savio but it's not the same as having your own vet on hand. Thank you to Hayley from Oakford Equine for her help that night. The next morning Savio was still not 100%. I think the heat and wind the day had taken its toll. Added to that, Savio usually has a selection of hay on offer at home. On this trip I only had the Oaten Export hay which looked amazing but he obviously didn't like! I decided to put him in the paddock for the morning. Let him get his head down, eat some grass and for me to re-evaluate the situation. Today was supposed to be my last day of travel. My destination was the central coast of NSW - another 12-13 hours of driving. Whilst the local vet managed to drench Savio successfully I was not filled with reassurance that if his condition worsened that they would be of much help. Also I was told that the highway was closed in places due to flooding! No one could tell me where it was closed and how far the diversions where. Some people were suggesting I go through Albury adding a further 7 hrs to my travel!

When all else fails in life Google is your friend!!! Google told me that Wagga Wagga was 6 hrs away, it had an Equine University, an Equine Centre right next door and as far as Google could tell me - minor flooding diversions! A quick call to Michael Proctor confirmed what I thought- to get Savio to Wagga so if the colic got worse at least I had super vet facilities available.

We picked up a bale of lucerne hay in Mildura, borrowed some meadow hay from Vicki at Carabita, organised yards for the horses at Mildura for when we arrived and warned the Vet clinic we were on our way! We left Mildura about 12.30 and arrived in Wagga at 7.30pm. We were diverted by the flooding but it was not as bad as people made out. Savio of course bounded off Esmay! By now the drench had started to work and he was now eating his "selection" of hay with gusto! But to be on the safe side he was drenched again! Yards were already setup for us by the wonderful people at Wagga Equine Centre so at least the horses were comfortable for the night!

Our final days' driving was a simple 7 hours to Karen Waterman's Karingal Equestrian Centre on the Central Coast of NSW. Seven hours of highway driving - no county roads, easy peasy! Both horses were so grateful (as was I) to at last have a paddock to eat grass in and have a hoon around. Karen, her husband Martin and daughter Charlotte were so accommodating, making us feel at home so quickly. Two days later Annemieke Vincourt arrived to hold a three day clinic at Karingal. The clinic was a great opportunity to meet some of the NSW riders, some of which were attending the Nationals too. Both my horses had settled back into work well and under Annemieke's watchful eye I felt well prepared for the Nationals. I moved the horses down to SIEC on Tuesday giving me that day to settle in. Savio was competing on the Thursday in the PSG and Abi not till the Friday for the Advanced. By now Savio was happily eating everything put in front of him and he is such a good boy under saddle that he doesn't need a lot of arena familiarisation. Abisha needs a little more but by Friday I was hopeful she would be settled.

We were stabled in the same row as Steph Spencer and Redskin R. It was great to catch up with Steph, Deb and Richard and a little humbling to be told that Savio would be representing WA in the FEI State Team as the PSG horse! What an honour! But I had to put that out of my mind and concentrate on my tests. I have a little problem with my memory so my goal at the Nationals was quite simple: to ride my tests with no errors of course, and to ride my horses to the very best of our abilities. Simples! But I needed to focus on the job at hand and not get distracted or intimidated by the fact I was at the Nationals.



I was drawn early in the PSG. Being on early meant that the warm up would be a little quieter and no "big names" about. With Annemieke's help I warmed Savio up as if it was any other competition. Soon it was my turn and I remember Annemieke's last instruction was to take my time, set each movement up and not hurry through the test. No time to be nervous - I had a job to do! Savio is such a star. I had only walked him around the arena the day before - by choice as I wanted to conserve his energy. He trotted and cantered around as if he had worked in the arena his whole life.

I rode my test with thought and preparation and tried not to hurry - actually I tried a little too hard not to hurry as the test lacked a little impulsion - but I had no major mistakes - and for my first EVER test at the Nationals I was rapt.

Friday was a busy day - Abisha had two Advanced tests and Savio the Inter 1. Abi warmed up a treat for her first Advanced. She felt amazing - my lessons with Annemieke were certainly paying off! Just the right amount of energy but listening at the same time. My test felt great and the judges agreed. Unfortunately for my second test there was some communication problem between the warmup arena and the competition arena. I was sent to the competition arena with the understanding that there were still two horses before me but when I arrived I had to go straight down the centreline. Abi was a little tense this time and would have benefited from a few minutes of work in the warmup section of the competition arena but not to worry we learn by our mistakes.

Savio's Inter 1 was held in Arena 1. My aim this time was to ride a little more actively! This time I was on my own for the warmup as Annemieke had other riders to help and by now I was confident in myself and Savio that I could do it on my own. Supergroom Ashley Jacobson kept her eye on the order for me so I could concentrate on my warmup. Savio never disappoints - and I was thrilled with our Inter 1.

Friday dawned and both the horses, Ashley and I were exhausted. Savio had now finished as unfortunately he didn't qualify for the Inter 1 Kur. I assumed that Abi would have a day off too as I didn't think she would have qualified for the Advanced Freestyle. A day off from dressage would be good for her and have her fresh for the Medium on Sunday. Imagine my surprise when Steph and Deb Spencer congratulated me on making the Freestyle! Wow! Abisha was one of Australia's top 15 Advanced horses! Not expecting to ride the Advanced Freestyle I was very under prepared. I knew the music as I was one I had used with Savio at Margaret River but I hadn't really practiced it on Abisha. Lesson learned - learn your Freestyle!

Riding the Freestyle was fantastic. Again no time to be nervous for either Abi or I. My little pocket rocket warmed up around the outside of the arena like a star - never batting an eyelid at a thing. Whilst I didn't get lost in my Freestyle it didn't feel as professional as I would have liked. Abi listened to me and did her very best. It was a very tired Abi that returned to the stables. We unplaited her, hosed her down and turned her out in her box to rest. As most of you will know the Nationals have live scoring. Cameron by now was following the live scoring from home. It was funny having him telling me my scores from Balcatta before I'd even unsaddled! He was pretty happy with my seventh place (as was I) and we laughed that I'd just missed out on placing as in the others tests placing went to 6th. What we didn't realise that in the Freestyle's placing was to 8th! Good grief I'd won a ribbon in the Open Competition! I wondered around the rest of the day in a little haze! Later in the afternoon, as I was walking past the indoor warm up, the steward asked me how I ended up. I told him that I placed 7th and was a little shell shocked. He replied that he will see me and my "lovely little mare" soon for presentations.... WHAT? Up until now ALL presentations had been unmounted in the Riders Lounge area of the Indoor....Abi was unplaited and had possibly used her manure as a pillow during her afternoon nap! I had 1/2 hr to plait her and be ready!

I raced to the stable passing Steph and Deb who were concerned to see me running came to the stable too... it was all hands on deck with Steph and I plaiting Abi, Ashley and Deb making her presentable and saddling her up!! A quick change to my competition gear and some 18 mins later we were ready. Heartfelt thanks to Steph and Deb for your help.

Abi's lap of honour was one of the most proud moments of my life. I was so proud of this hot little mare - she gave me her heart and soul. She can be tricky but when she gives me her all she is with me 100%.



Final day of competition arrived. Abi by now was really tired. The biggest lesson I have learnt from this journey is that my horse were not fit enough for four days of competition. The trip takes a lot out of them, going to new stables does too, so next time I go East (yup I'm planning on going again!) I need to have them much much fitter!

Abi's first Medium test was ok - not as good as our Advanced but with no mistakes. She got a little rattled in the warmup arena. A rider was on a stallion that was really very naughty and perhaps should have left the warmup. Riding a mare I needed to avoid this combination, which was difficult as the stewards moved it to near the final warmup for my Medium. We decided to go for gold in my last test. By now Abi was truly exhausted. I picked up a whip - just to carry as just carrying it is enough incentive for her! My entry was good - first medium trot started amazingly until I decided to ask for more and she lost balance and cantered... the rest of the test was a little tense with a communication problem on the final centreline. Still I was happy - she gave me her all and had I not overridden her on the first diagonal and just tried for a simple test my marks would have been higher. It was my choice to err of the side of safe and simple!



A journey like this is one that you don't do on your own, but with the help of many many friends. Thank you to the following for helping me achieved this dream - Gavin and Sonja Thomson, Roz Tippet, Ashley Jacobsen, Michael Proctor and Oakford Equine Clinic, Karen, Martin and Charlotte Waterman of Karingal Equestrian, Ben Wheatley who ensured the horse feet were spot on prior to and returning from the trip! Anita Marchesani, Sue Goodwin and Sharon Jarvis for answering all my questions!

Heartfelt thanks to the Spencer family, Steph, Chef Deb and Richard for your help and support especially with my first word problem and Steph for keeping Savio energised with Nature Vet products.

To Annemieke Vincourt - Thank you so much. Annemeike was not only my coach, but friend, camper van installer, mentor the list goes on.... Cheers Buddy!!

To my husband Cameron.... I was asked if I was sponsored by anyone to which I replied "only my husband's wallet" Thanks for making this achievable for me and talking on the way home about "when you do this next



time.....". This journey was only going to be a once off but I learnt so much about my riding and myself that I hope to do it a few more time in my riding life. I urge anyone to give it a go too...

Steph Spencer riding Redskin R

I really am so lucky. I've had amazing friends and family surrounding me throughout this adventure and my very good Shanon McKimmie has been an amazing host to Redskin and myself while I was based with her since before Boneo CDI until the Nationals. Mum flew over to help me pack everything up and make the 10 hour drive from Daylesford to SIEC. Redskin travelled like a dream and having the camera to watch him the whole way in his little Super Sonic Equi-trek was very mind easing. Everywhere we stopped we had people 'checking us out' and asking all sorts of questions. I think all Redskin really wanted was a happy meal and a toy instead of listening to the non-horsey folk comment on his ride! Travelling in convoy with Shanon and her dad, it made for mind easing safety in numbers and we rolled in with no dramas at all.

We chose to travel on the Monday, with my first day of competition on the Thursday, I felt it gave me enough time up my sleeve if something didn't quite go to plan. But as it was, he bounced off the truck and had a nice familiarisation and we reacquainted ourselves with the sun again on the Tuesday. Shanon and I even went for a lovely walk out around the race track, but apparently Redskin won't be making an eventer anytime soon as those cross country fences are extremely scary! A lovely change of scenery and a nice way to stretch their bodies after a big day on the road. Another ride on Wednesday and it was so exciting when Terrina rolled into our stable row too. Later in the afternoon Dad, aka the courier, flew in and joined in the fun!

Thursday morning was quite busy as Terrina was the first WA rider to go for our teams competition. How exciting we had a full WA FEI team!! Terrina and Savio did a super job and we then had to run up to watch Deon and Royal Oak perform their team test-the Inter 2. Deon was as always very cool, calm and collected and wow the piaffe is a real highlight. A super score of 70% and that was really putting us in a good position. I suddenly thought, oh god I better not stuff up tomorrow in the Inter 1!! I was very happy with my PSG, no mistakes but lots of areas to tidy but he stayed relaxed and kept it together in the indoor. Good boy Redskin! It was a real shock when I finished 8th behind some seriously impressive combinations! It's hard to remember this is only Redskin's first season of small tour.

Friday was busy for Terrina with the Advanced classes as well as her Inter 1 and she did an amazing job in all 3 tests! Deon again had another great day and Redskin was again a good lad. Again, no major mistakes in his Inter 1 but many areas to tighten up and improve and he finished 10th! I think 6 to 10th were all on 67.something so it was very close! Saturday was the freestyle day and it was so cool to watch Abi and Terrina do a super job and even get to do mounted presentations! Unfortunately, but fortunately all the same, Redskin's trot has really developed so therefore, the tempo has changed. So this meant I was sooooo behind in my music for the freestyle and it really rattled me. A few mistakes and some tension this time along with silly rider errors (sorry Redskin) and it didn't really come off as planned at all. But it's all experience and the fact we got in and still finished 10th again was a massive bonus.

A really special moment was on the Saturday night when a relatively small group of riders got presented with our National Gold Performance medals. This is for Novice and Elementary horses who have scored 75% plus 3 times or more and Medium and above horses that have scored 70% plus in at least 3 official tests. I was very proud that Dolce was awarded for Novice and Skywalker for Medium. But the most special thing was their owner Heidi Emery and her husband Alistair Mackinlay had made the trip over to support me so they got to join in the presentations and fun too! So thanks Heidi, for giving me the rides on those stunning horses.

After this, they did the FEI teams presentations and after a quick sprint down the stairs by Terrina to join Deon and I in the arena, as we weren't actually informed of this so it was a little bit of a panic and surprise!!! But we managed to finish 2nd!!! It was so exciting and behind a seriously strong team from NSW I think it's something we can all be very proud of! A big thanks to my wonderful Mum who was appointed our team Chef. She made sure she was at everyone's warm up and test ring side and dad even videoed at least our team test for us! Personally for me, I think the team event and result was a highlight of the competition! Thankfully I pulled my finger out and got it all together for the last day – the PSG Stars of the Future class. This class is specifically for



young horses new to the level so it's great to see where he sat amongst horses of similar age and level to him. A super test I was so happy with but now need to get the expression I know I can at home, in the ring and keep it...sadly not so easy! I was absolutely thrilled to finish 3rd behind the very clever Deon who took home the win and Danielle Dirks who was second. Not bad for the little Aussie bred, now West Aussie! We packed up what we could ready for an early departure Monday morning and Dad and I shared the drive back while Mum flew home to take care of the rest of the steeds I've left in her capable hands.

This journey really wouldn't have been possible without so many peoples help along the way particularly Mum and Dad. Horseland Midland, Spooks riding, Combined Horse Transport, Ceva-Nature Vet, Saddlesfit Australia, Horsemate Bedding and Equi-trek Perth my own sponsors. Along with my super farrier Matt Smailes and amazing Dentist Martin from WAVED. I would also like to thank Dressage WA for running the Young Rider Challenge while Stephen Clarke was over last year as my prize money from that has gone directly to this trip. With entries and accommodation on site for the nationals alone costing \$1500, it's not a cheap exercise. The money also given from the DWA committee (I believe from our levies) as the winner of the State Small Tour Championship earlier in the year has also been of great assistance so, thank you very much! We were also gifted a team Rug for our lovely horses which was a beautiful touch and really appreciate the gesture-now no ripping it Redskin! Looking forward to getting back home and seeing the friendly and familiar faces around the competitions again!





RDWA Progressive Dressage Competition

By Val Mayger

This competition is run, each year, by the RDAWA Dressage Committee and is currently in its third year. The idea was born out of a concern from RDA Centres that another competition would put more work on the already hard working RDA Volunteers. They would have to transport horses and work with riders at this competition, which, by necessity, would be on a weekend. The idea of this Progressive Competition is to appoint a judge and that judge travels to each Centre and judges the riders, who have entered the competition. This can take place on the Centre's normal riding day, alleviating any travelling of horses and weekend volunteering for the generous people who already give up so much of their time. Tests are offered in Walk, Trot and Canter and both physically and intellectually challenged riders are encouraged to enter.

This year, we had eight Centres enter the competition – four country and four metropolitan. Our Judge was, Sharon Jarvis, who travelled from Margaret River and Collie in the south to Geraldton in the Midwest. Sharon has judged this event since its inception. She is an inspiration to the riders as she can demonstrate that a disability can develop abilities. She is very popular with riders, parents and Centre staff alike and always finds time to talk to all the riders and sometimes to ride a horse for them. Sharon can also 'talent spot' for any potential Para riders at these competitions.

I have attended a number of these days and judged when Sharon has been on Para Equestrian duties. To see the effort the riders and Centres go to, to have the horses looking immaculate and often plaited, is quite humbling. It is treated as a most important day in the Centres' calendar. Arenas are erected with care, riders are dressed in their Centre uniform, or in some cases, riding coats have been borrowed or purchased – everything is ready to go and excitement is high.

At the conclusion of the day, all riders receive a participation ribbon. The judge collects the tests and takes them with her to be calculated and ranked with the tests from other Centres. When all Centres, who have entered, are visited and the tests ranked, the results are published. Winners and Placegetters receive their tests and ribbons from their respective Coaches, who have received them at the Coaches' Workshop. Distributing the test sheets and ribbons at the Workshop provides an opportunity to promote the event and to discuss coaching techniques with the Coaches.

RDWA Dressage runs two competitions a year – The Progressive Dressage and the Four Phase Challenge. The Challenge is a competition between Centres as well as an individual competition. It consists of Dressage, English Equitation, Jumping and Trail. Scores from these events are considered when selecting teams to compete in the National Special Olympics and the RDAA Championships.

Masters Series to change

Dressage WA wishes to announce that the Dressage Masters Series will not run in 2017. There will be a leaderboard including all competitions replacing this event and details will be released shortly.



Steward's Corner

By Janet Reid

Protective Headgear Regulations

As per Equestrian Australia, General Regulations, Article 122.2 the following will apply:

Except where Sport Rules allows otherwise, riders and drivers competing in an EA competition, must wear an approved helmet with the chin strap fastened at all times. The same is recommended when riding a horse at any time.

Protective headgear must conform with one of the current approved safety standards:

- ✚ Current Australian standard AS/NZS 3838 (2006 onwards) provided they are SAI Global marked.
- ✚ New Australian standard ARB HS 2012 provided they are SAI Global marked.
- ✚ Current American standards ASTM F1163 (2004a or 04a onwards) provided they are SEI marked, or SNELL E2001.
- ✚ Current British standard PAS 015 (1998 or 2011) provided they are BSI Kitemarked
- ✚ Interim European Standard VG1 (01.040: 2014-12) with or without BSI Kitemark.

BSI Kitemarked:



SAI Global marked:



SEI marked:



✗ **Outgoing European Standard EN/1384 during 2016 only – not permitted from 2017.**



Gidgegannup Dressage Club raising money

By Kai Schuler

Outstanding commitment to supporting their local community was felt by all when the **Gidgegannup Dressage Club donated \$1,700 from their 'Open Training Day' to the West Gidgegannup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.**

"The support of our local community and in particular this generous donation from the Gidgegannup Dressage Club is very much appreciated in this critical time at the beginning of Western Australia's bush fire season" said Mark Smith, Lieutenant of the West Gidgegannup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.

Gidgegannup Dressage Club's membership has many horse, home and land owners in bushfire-prone areas who are immensely thankful for the hard working volunteer bush fire fighters. As part of the local community, the committee and members were passionate about organising this event to pay-it-forward to the local brigade.

"Our committee and members are dedicated to ensuring that the Gidgegannup Dressage Club becomes a contributing part of the Gidgegannup fabric, extending beyond local riders to include support of all local services who are essential to the safety and inclusion of all within our community." said Kai Schuler, President of Gidgegannup Dressage Club.

Gidgegannup Dressage Club's inaugural Open Training Day had the support and participation of almost 40 riders across nearly 70 Dressage Tests throughout all levels, from Preparatory to Advanced.

To find out more about Gidgegannup Dressage Club and how you can be involved, please visit www.gidgegannupdressageclub.com.





From the Judge's Box

By Elaine Greene

Photos by Rebecca De Vries from Horseplay Photography



FEI 5* Dressage Judge Mary Seefried spent the weekend of 19th-20th November in WA conducting seminars for judges, riders and coaches. Both days were well attended and several people, including riders, took advantage of Mary's expertise on both days. Demonstration horses ranged from Medium up to GP level. It was encouraging to have country based horse and rider combinations join us. During the two days there were many opportunities for riders to benefit from Mary's knowledge and to gain feedback from her.

Mary pointed out that a horse will have natural ability but it is up to the rider to train that ability to improve and develop the horse. Riders must pay attention to the horses training, adjustability and improvement.

We had healthy discussion throughout the weekend on a variety of topics such as rule changes, international trends for the future of the sport. Topics also included the roles of judges and stewards and the need for team work.

We would like to thank the following riders for bringing their horses to demonstrate for us – Melanie Nixon, Judy Weber, Sonja Johnson, Tegan Sutton, Colin Chantler, Hannie Byrne and Rebecca Tsouris. Your input was appreciated and the turnout of horses and riders stunning!

We would like to remind all dressage riders that you are welcome to attend our seminars and workshops. You don't have to ride. We would be delighted to see you and hear your views from a competitor's perspective. Bring along your coach too!

On behalf of DJTF, Elaine, Hannie, Wendy, Hazel, Gill, Didy, Marg and Polly, enjoy the festive season and look forward to seeing you next year.





British Dressage National Convention

Stephen Clarke: how to get the most out of your horse's trot — whatever the breed

We thought this to be an interesting article written by Alice Collins at the British Dressage National Convention 19/20 November 2016. Alice writes for the Horse and Hound Magazine and reported on Stephen Clarke's session working with a variety of horses. The theme this year was, 'You can get the most out of your horse whatever the breed'

"Dressage is about judging horses against the criteria — I don't care how big, or what colour they are. There is only one horse in recent times who only has highlights and no real weaknesses — Valegro. He can fulfil almost all the criteria which is why he's broken records, but it's a rarity. Some horses find the collection work easy, while some find it easier to extend, but it's very rare to find a horse that can go to the extremes of both."

He demonstrated his belief in this notion with an enlightening masterclass which featured a wide variety of breeds and types.

Martin Greet presented the Welsh section D mare Watling Shakira. Although the mare is no stranger to competition — competing at Medium level — she started tense in the atmosphere of the Hartpury arena, and her trot was hurried and choppy. "She's a bit quick at the moment, but that's the mind as much as the body," Stephen told Martin. "Play with the transitions and ride the lateral work to start if the horse is nervous — it often gives them something else to think about." Stephen asked Martin to numerous walk-trot transitions alternating with shoulder-in steps. "Do that until the horse 'gives its self-up' and relaxes into the work," he advised. "The safer and more secure the rhythm becomes, the more you can think about riding forwards to encourage ground cover and improve the quality of the trot."

The mare — a compact, responsive type — was hot and reactive. "She's sharp today, but I like this automatic sharpness," said Stephen. "Later on, when her training is more established, that will pay dividends as you'll know you'll always get a reaction from her." Stephen encouraged Martin to ride lots of small changes of pace within the trot. "Take time and make small variations in the bend and speed to relax her," he suggested. It worked wonders. By the end of their session, Shakira's trot had slowed and she was showing a rounder, more elevated stride. She was relaxed over her back, allowing her to make larger steps, and her increased confidence meant she was no longer hurrying. Martin stretched her neck down. "When the horse stretches in trot, allow time for the horse to spring up onto the next diagonal pair with big strides so they can engage the back muscles and swing into a contact," he concluded.

With Jade Clark on the grey advanced medium Lusitano stallion Espirito, Stephen worked more on the basic trot. "He has a lovely natural regularity in his paces and a correct natural frame," praised Stephen. After riding some more collected trot, Stephen asked Jade to lengthen the strides across the diagonal. Espirito was so willing to please that he flew across the school and, although his energy was wonderful, he pushed himself off the hind leg and onto the forehand. Stephen had an exercise to fix it. Jade rode a short patch of shoulder-in on the long side, then straightened and asked for some medium strides before putting Espirito back into shoulder-in for the final part of the long side. The effect was immediate. "The quality of the medium trot is all about the level of engagement in the working trot," explained Stephen, "so the horse can keep pushing without falling on to his forehand. For the higher marks, the engagement and uphill balance is key." When Charlie Samuel-Camps first asked her gypsy cob gelding Glasshards Warrior for some extended strides, she didn't get much of a reaction. "Don't think for a moment that just because he's a cob he hasn't got lengthening," he chided. "It is just about training his reactions." Stephen asked Charlie to give Glasshards Warrior a flick with her schooling whip as she asked, but that meant she also pulled back with the rein. To correct it, Stephen had her ride the lengthened strides with her reins in one hand and use the whip with her other, free hand so as not to interfere with the contact. The resulting burst of energy from the attractive horse resulted in a round of applause. "It's amazing how we can unlock the horse's potential when there's a genuine reaction to be had," said Stephen. "Don't let him fool you; there's a lot in there. Sometimes you just have to take a risk. In a judging situation, I feel we can be generous to riders for minor mistakes. It's all about trying to encourage riders to take a risk and ask for a reaction that will lead to a future of good work."



Dressage for Every Rider at Swan River Dressage's Dressage with Decorum Events

By Wendy Barker



A small group of riders who live in Perth and work full time, discussed the key issue which riders raised at the Dressage Rider's Forums – i.e. the demand for more dressage events in the metropolitan area, particularly for riders wanting to compete in Participant and FEI Tests.

One of the Co-Chairs commented, 'Dressage has one thing in common with every other sport. It is constructed on a pyramid. The 'grass root' competitors at the base of the pyramid are the lifeblood of all sports. To make our sport more robust at the higher levels, our dressage pyramid needs a much stronger and broader base. This is why we have structured our events to cater for all competitors.'

The group knew that Swan River Dressage Inc (SRD) had been in abeyance for 18 months, so in June they advertised a general meeting and formed a new SRD Committee, which revamped the club so it would cater for dressage riders of all levels.

For 2016, the Committee planned 3 events over 2 weekends in October at Swan Valley Equestrian Park. They combined official EA events with club events, invited a Guest Judge from Victoria, and included a Protocol Day as well as a Young Dressage Horse Feature Event.

A Committee member remarked, 'Entries for our events have been absolutely fantastic, we have been delighted and amazed at the riders' enthusiasm. We have taken an innovative approach to each of our events, and this seems to have really fuelled interest from riders and from spectators.'

One innovation that riders have appreciated is the events title: 'Dressage with Decorum.' A Committee member explained, 'We wanted our events to be friendly, inclusive and enjoyable for everyone connected to the day, whether a participant was a competitor, a helper, a spectator, an organiser or an official. We have had positive feedback about the warmth and friendliness of our events, so the title seems to have helped to achieve our aim!'

Another innovation the club has introduced is Swan River Dressage Tests which were specially designed to create a gentle 'ramp' for horses and riders to progress from Novice to Elementary, and from Elementary to Medium. These tests are modelled on tests used in a number of other countries. 'Riders are telling us they love these tests,' said a SRD organiser. 'We are finding inexperienced riders are developing their skills to progress through the levels in a positive way and greener horses, even when ridden by more experienced riders, seem to appreciate the horse-friendly way they have been constructed.'

A third innovation SRD has made this year is to expand Young Dressage Horse classes in their Young Horse Feature Event – this report appears in a separate article in this Newsletter.

Everyone on the Committee agreed that support and assistance for people wanting to develop their judging skills is a MUST – this was SRD's fourth innovation. An SRD spokesperson said, 'At each of our events we have had several trainee and upgrading judges working with Judge Educators and Mentors, and we have also had Trainee Stewards working with our very experienced WA Steward Janet Reid. We welcome anyone who is keen to learn, and we will always do our utmost to help with training people who want to officiate in our fabulous sport.'

A fifth innovation SRD has made is to award Sportsmanship Awards to people who really have supported the concept of Dressage with Decorum. Sportsmanship Certificates and bottles of wine were awarded to Kathy



Van Eykelenborg and Melaineey Lee-Newland for their great sportsmanship at the first SRD event on 1 October, and to Deanna McDade and Marjorie Radford for their helpful and friendly contributions at the second and third events on 29 and 30 October.

A sixth innovation SRD has made this year is to offer a club Grand Prix. Five riders in WA have been 'dipping their toe in the water' of Middle Tour and Intermediate II this year, so the club suggested they may wish to ride a closed club Grand Prix event before the weather becomes too hot for most Big Tour horses to compete. Three riders competed on the day and entered the club Grand Prix. As well as marking a personal milestone in their riding careers, riding the Grand Prix test gave these riders invaluable Big Tour experience.

Penrose Park Garlands created the seventh innovation - awarding beautiful floral rosettes sponsored by Ellis Brook Training Centre and Penrose Park Garlands. Stunning rosettes created by Melaineey Lee-Newland were awarded to all placegetters in the club events at both Swan River Dressage Club Events, and to all placegetters in the five classes of the Young Dressage Horse & Pony Feature Event.

SRD's second Co-Chair commented, 'We are all incredibly passionate about dressage, most of us were competing when there were more than 30 official dressage fixtures per year in Perth, just a few years ago. So many of our riders are part time riders who only compete on one or two horses, so to be at their best, they need as much competition exposure as possible to develop and maintain their "ringcraft skills". Most horses need to be in a competition environment regularly to perform at their best, particularly our many greener horses. It has been interesting watching the performance of a number of horses that have had 4 or 5 opportunities to compete in the last 8 weeks, we can see that many of these performances have improved significantly with the benefit of regular competition exposure on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Riders' scores have improved, and better scores motivate those riders and their connections, getting out and competing regularly creates its own momentum.'

Swan River Dressage is at present deciding the details of a two day championship-style event in September. After the enormous success of the Protocol Sessions on 30 October, the Committee is also discussing holding similar sessions next year. SRD will again be supporting trainee and upgrading judges at every fixture they run, and with the aim of further expanding opportunities for people to develop their dressage riding skills in the metro area, is currently discussing partnerships with several other clubs.

For 2017 plans are already well underway, Swan River Dressage will hold four official events combined with club events in 2017, with plans to bring an interstate Guest Judge for each event.





Young Dressage Horse Feature Event with Swan River Dressage Inc

By Wendy Barker

Five gorgeous horses and ponies were awarded winner's rugs at Swan River Dressage's Young Horse Feature Event at Swan Valley Equestrian Park in Baskerville on Sunday 30 October in glorious weather, and all placegetters were awarded beautiful floral rosettes by Penrose Park Garlands.

Guest Judge Veronica Steward from Victoria was President of the Ground Jury, sharing the officiating and commentary with two Western Australian Young Dressage Horse Judges, Hannie Byrne & Wendy Barker.

All three EA Young Horse Judges are FEI riders who are eminently qualified to judge young horses, as they have started many young horses themselves, & they are also highly experienced Grand Prix Judges.

Responding to popular request, Swan River Dressage introduced an innovation in their Feature Event. Recognising that there are limited opportunities for young horses to gain 'competition mileage' in WA, & that most riders in WA are part time riders, the club offered an additional Elementary class for horses up to 8 years of age.

The Swan River Dressage Elementary Test 3a for horses and ponies actually doubled the entries in the Young Horse Feature Event!

'We were just delighted to have 12 entries in our Young Horse Feature Event, we have been told this is the largest Young Dressage Horse Event ever in WA!' said a member of the Organising Committee.

'When we received such good entries, we ordered embroidered rugs for the winners,' said Mel Emery from the Committee. Placegetters were awarded beautiful floral rosettes designed by Melaine Lee-Newland of Penrose Park Garlands. The Holland family kindly supported this Young Horse event with sponsorship.

'We were delighted that so many spectators arrived for champagne/orange juice & nibbles in the sunshine,' said SRD Co-Chair Wendy Barker.

'People seemed to enjoy watching each class then listening to commentary by the judges about what they liked and what is expected in each Young Horse age group', said SRD Co-Chair Melaine Lee-Newland.

The top score of the day - 79.8% - went to the handsome and lightfooted 17.2hh Hanoverian imported gelding Max, ridden by Teagan Sutton and owned by Wendy and John Barker.

Marjory Radford's lovely KWPN Felice de Jeu gelding also had a great score on 70% to win the 6 year old class.

The judges particularly liked both of these horse's canters, which showed very good uphill balance, lightness, scope and ability to collect.