

Rider Development and Team Training weekend (March 2015)

Over the weekend of 28th & 29th March, Anne and Dave Savage were generous hosts to this training weekend in Spalding. Maaike Burggrafer was the invited trainer from The Netherlands who led the weekend.

There was a good number of riders attending, 12 in all, from young riders, potential team members, to those wishing to develop their performance in competition.

On Saturday morning, each rider performed their chosen tests on the oval track. They had to prepare, warm up and then simply perform. This was closely monitored by Maaike, with notes taken and video too. Each rider was then given some feedback from Maaike there and then and asked to perform again, change a few things, tempo, sequence etc. Then as a group, it was analysis time!

Huddled together in the classroom, each riders performance was evaluated on the 'big screen', Maaike taking the time to talk through with the rider their performance and feedback given. Whether you like it or not – watching yourself on TV is a good way to see what your combination looks like and to understand why and how little changes matter! Whilst watching the 12 videoed tests, there was the tummy rumbling smell of sausages on the bbq for lunch in the background! But everyone kept their focus!

After lunch, Maaike set everyone a task, either in the riding arena, on the track, individually or with a partner....with daylight fading, the schedule was tight and Maaike once again kept a very close eye on everyone!

The horses were finished for the day and with the lights on, it was time to turn the focus to our 'mental preparations'. There were games; physical and mental and this was a good element of the course – finding out our personalities and how we can channel this on the track! And so we were eating again - supper was kindly delivered and a small break in the schedule to eat it!

Tired bodies and minds headed to bed to prepare for the next day – waterproofs at the ready!

Each rider was once again under the spotlight and Maaike worked with each of them on different things. After each session, the rider was set some training tasks – 'homework' to work on. The weather on Sunday was not kind, but Maaike did not complain and kept everyone busy – those at the tail end of the schedule were worse off with the weather, the very last rider having to abandon the oval track and head for the arena – with such strong winds and horizontal rain – dry clothes were running out! Each rider left with a page full of notes and homework, slightly soggy round the edges, but a very useful piece of paper.

All in all, it was a very successful, fun and educational weekend. Our great thanks go to Maaike for her input, Anne and Dave for their kind hospitality and to Mike Adams for organising the weekend.

Every team is made up of individuals – but individuals make up a great team. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the weekend.