

Area Show Jumping qualifier at Earls Barton

Following the success of the various team members at the evening jumping at Woodhurst, it was with some excitement and anticipation that we all arrived at Earls Barton on Sunday 17th July. Miraculously, everyone who had been invited to compete managed to keep their horses and lorries sound so we all turned up with eager faces for the commencement of the competition.

I confess that the day didn't start too well when I did my round in the Style jumping. This was the first time I had done this type of competition so wasn't too sure what was expected. For those who are not familiar, this competition is similar to dressage but judged over jumps. Still they do say that show jumping is just dressage with jumps in the way. After saluting to the judge, you are required to canter round on both reins and when the judge is ready for you to commence jumping they sound a buzzer. Donny started nicely over the first few jumps, enabling me to stay balanced and steady. Unfortunately he then took a dislike to the double at fence four and stopped. This cost me 3 penalties for the stop and 8 time penalties were added at the end as well. Bringing him back, he took the fence well, then continued pretty much as if nothing had happened. My final score wasn't brilliant because of the stop (it would have been quite respectable otherwise) but it was worth the experience and prepared Donny for the main event which was the Novice team jumping.

The team consisted of Charlotte Shepherd on Zulu, Laura Green on Cara, Sarah Jones on Daydream Dolly and me on FOH Baron Eakley (Donny to his friends). Lisa Hodges was jumping Frankie as an individual and was also competing as an individual in the Intermediate on Comex Van Overis (hope I spelt that right). Lisa didn't have a great deal of luck on either horse but hopefully enjoyed the day out. The first round for the team started quite well with 2 clears (Dolly and Donny) and a refusal from Cara to carry 5 penalties to the 2nd round. Zulu unfortunately decided that it was not one of his jumping days but I hope Charlotte won't be discouraged by this. Donny went clear in the 2nd round and Cara tipped a fence but we were quite excited when Dolly went round as she is usually very reliable. Unbelievably she tipped the first part of the last double leaving the team on 13 penalties. This proved good enough for a sixth place so well done to everyone. I think Donny must have been tired for the jump off as he tipped a couple of fences and the time wasn't great given that he was making some quite tight but balanced turns.

Many thanks to everyone who turned up and a special thank you to Lesley who acted as arena party for North Mymms and complained bitterly all the way home about the pain in her back.

Mark Irwing

Chef D'Equipe