

## Deveron Branch of the Pony Club

The Pony Club National Novice Championships  
Kelshall Hill Equestrian Centre  
Tarpoley  
Cheshire  
29 & 30 Aug 2009

Thurs 27 Aug – 3 lorries, 1 car, 6 horses, 6 riders and 10 assorted drivers and grooms, not to mention loads of feed and indescribable amounts of tack, clothing and grooming products, headed south towards Cheshire. The reason? Deveron PC Branch had 2 teams who had qualified for the Pony Club National Novice Championship[s]. These were the teams-

Dressage - Hannah Hunter and Tia  
Hannah Lawson and Beakers Bay  
Lottie Haley-Lee and Bartusvanhet Vorrssengershof  
Maisie Ingram and Oh So Skippy

Eventing - Hannah Hunter and Tia

Hannah Lawson and Beakers Bay  
Stephanie Stewart and Atlantic Blend  
Stephen Hamilton and Talnamounth



Lady

So, off we went. Some of us travelled through the heavy rain that was sufficient to cancel Blair Atholl Horse Trials on the next day. By Friday afternoon we had all arrived safely, just in time to watch the next heavy downpour convert the stabling area and lorry park into a mudbath. Fortunately everything had dried up considerably by Saturday morning so that our dressage team was able to present to the officials with horses and tack gleaming, riders smart and not a speck of mud to be seen. They all did their tests simultaneously, so we were trying to watch all 4 at once.

The competition was very stiff as we had suspected when we saw a number of competitors walking around wearing "England Dressage Squad" sweatshirts. Our team achieved a very creditable 20<sup>th</sup> out of 40. Hannah Hunter was 8<sup>th</sup> out of 40 in her section, and so came home with a rosette.



Sunday morning saw another frenzy of activity to get the horses and riders (once again for the two Hannahs) ready for the turnout inspection. Once again they looked fabulous! And this team also produced an excellent set of dressage tests.

But their relief was short lived when they saw the show jumps. Not only were the jumps up to maximum height and spread, and adorned with pot plants, but also the arena was very hilly, Hannah, Hannah, Stephanie and Stephen were looking decidedly depressed until one of them suggested that they ride it like a cross country course! Despite their forebodings of elimination, they all completed the course in style, but did pick up a few jumping penalties between them.

Next to the XC course. Again the jumps were big, and this time, solid, But, one after the other they set off and came home safe and CLEAR! Even the commentator said how smart they looked as a team “wearing their black and gold colours”. (The colours are really navy and yellow – but she was right about how smart they were!)

However, the jumping faults took their toll and the end result was 24<sup>th</sup> out of 40. Another very creditable performance.

The long journey home, again more rain en route. We arrived home safely, and thoroughly delighted to have been able to take part in, what was for all of us, an experience of a lifetime.