

# BATTLE & DISTRICT RIDING CLUB

## **A day at the Area 10 Dressage**

Alarm goes off at 5.30am, not unusual in our household as that is the time I get up for work, but this was a Sunday! Crawl out of bed and get motivated – today we are going to represent Battle and District Riding club at the Area Championships as an individual and my first test is at 9.20am and it is 50 miles away!

Horse loaded and on our way by 6.50am - a little behind schedule but not much. As we are travelling along I ask my groom, aka partner Rob, if he has remembered to pick up the directions from the printer. Answer – NO! Mild panic as no sat nav on board and no postcode even if we had. So google Warren Barn Farm and hey presto wonders of modern technology get required map and directions. Relax again!

Arrive an hour before my first test which was the Senior Prelim Riding Test. This turned out not to be enough time because of all the checks, hat, flu, declaration sheets, trying to work out how to get round to the working in and then to find the steward for my arena. Never mind have quick walk, trot and canter and hope to get a bit of time to go round the outside of the arena as well. Unfortunately for my plans, the rider before me had either learnt or been entered for the wrong test so retired and the judge sounded the horn as soon as I had declared to the writer. Deep breath and down the centre line!

Was the test good – no it was rubbish! My horse coughed, farted, blew his nose and stopped to try and get rid of a horse fly in the first trot and capped it all by bucking into the first canter. Half way through the test I realised I was on the wrong diagonal – not good when one is being judged on ones riding skills!

An hour to wait before my next test – Prelim 12. This time I am determined to give us both enough time to relax and settle. Preparations go according to plan and my horse does a good test with only one or two tiny mistakes on the part of the rider such as could have been straighter down the centre line and could have gone into the corners more in canter.

Results – well definitely last in the first test but possibly sixth in my arena in the second test. (I did not stay for the results as it looked like they might be some time)

*Mary Gillam*

It was well worth the effort, everyone was very friendly and I saw several people I knew from other clubs. So thank you Battle and District for encouraging me to have a go!



PS My horse is a 19 year old Welsh cob and it is 30 years since I last did an area competition - proving I think that it's never too late!

Mary Gillam