

Taunton Vale Branch of the Pony Club Branch Newsletter - December 2011



Dear All,

Time for our last newsletter of 2011 and a round-up of all the things that have taken place over the Autumn/Winter weeks. It's been a busy time and I'm sure everyone is glad that the Christmas holidays are here at last, let's hope that the weather will be kind and you'll be able to spend lots of time with your ponies - when you've managed to brush off all that lovely mud☺.

Membership 2011

We've reached the end of the Pony Club year, which means that 2012 subscriptions are due on 1st January 2012. Please visit our website at <http://branches.pcuk.org/tauntonvale> to print your form and return it to Helen. Those who joined after 1st October 2011 and paid the full annual subscription do not need to do anything – your membership will continue through 2012. The annual membership subscription has increased to £58, but I'm sure you'll agree that this still represents very good value for the package that members receive.

Our current membership stands at 58, which is wonderful, but as always, the more members we have, the more activities we can offer, so if you know of somewhere appropriate to advertise the Taunton Vale Pony Club, please contact Helen for a poster.

New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members:

Ella Bewes	Mitchell Chase
Georgia Davies	Matilda Doak
Megan Edwards	Tessa Warby
Alice Pittey	

As always, if you see any new faces at rallies, please be sure to say hello and be as helpful as possible.

Round-up of Events

As well as the many general rallies that have taken place over the past three months, here's a snapshot of some other events from the programme. A huge thanks to all the Mums and Dads that helped to organise the rallies, events and training sessions and of course to Chris and Sarah Salisbury for allowing us to hold so many events at Bickenhall Farm throughout the year.

Team Showjumping

Our mini team showjumpers were busy during the half-term holiday and took part in two inter-branch competitions.

On Saturday 22nd October at Stockland Lovell the team took home 2nd and 4th place rosettes, and Harrison Dummett took a 3rd place individual rosette.

On Thursday 27th October at Pontispool, team members Sophie Turner, Isla Ginbey and Isabel Porter came 2nd in the 1st class with Isobel taking 5th place individual and Isla taking 6th.

Unfortunately Oliver Dummett, Lauryn Turner, Ellie Porter and Isla weren't placed in class 2, but they all rode very well and showed great sportsmanship. In class 3 Harrison Dummett, Ellie Porter and Lauryn Turner achieved 4th place and Harrison took 3rd individual.

Trailer Handling Session, Saturday 15th October

This was the second trailer handling session we have held for those new to trailer towing, explaining some of the do's and don'ts and general maintenance tips. Steve Jaggs, a very patient instructor with lots of experience in this area met us at Merryfield for a couple of hours of quite intense tuition. Everyone went away, exhausted, but having made a lot of progress with the dreaded reversing and promising to meet up again in Spring for the next stage. Keep practising!

Riding and Road Safety Tests, Sunday 9th October

Sarah and Rachel worked hard with everyone to prepare them for their appropriate level of Riding and Road Safety test. On the day, Pippa Hoyle's pony Poppy helped eight children to ride beautifully and competently around the circuit and Toots Salisbury's Georgie helped three more on their way to success. What some wonderfully kind ponies we have in our Branch.

The instructors Emily Wootton and Holly Whitcombe did a fantastic job of getting everyone up to scratch during the morning and ready for the examiner, Jenny Bult, to put them through their paces in the afternoon.



We're delighted that the following members passed the test and have received their badges:

Mini Riding and Road Safety - Megan Edwards, Letty Johnson, Ellie Porter

Achievement Badge Road Rider – Helena Brown, Eloise Brown, Gracie Hammond, Pippa Hoyle, Flora Johnson, Lewis O'Malley, Evie Phillips. Kate Shapland, Felicity Watts and Millie Stewart.

Very well done to you all.



Attainment Tests, Sunday 6th November

Next came the Attainment tests with the following successes:

E Test

Alice Pittey, Matilda Doak, Georgia Davies, Isabel Porter, Ellie Porter

D Test

Oliver Dummett, Megan Edwards, Isla Ginbey

D + Test

Harrison Dummett, Lewis O'Malley, Millie Stewart

C Test

Pippa Hoyle, Gracie Hammond, Felicity Watts, Evie Phillips

Congratulations to you all – great work 😊

Trip to the World Horse Welfare Centre, Somerton on Saturday 29th October

The WHW is a charity that helps horses and ponies in need and is one that we support by sharing our fundraising money with when possible. To give everyone a better insight into the fantastic work of the WHW, Lou Turner arranged a visit for members and parents. The WHW staff gave a talk and took everyone on a tour of the fields and introduced us to some of the horses that have been rescued. Following this visit, the Taunton Vale Pony Club has decided to adopt Homer, one of the WHW horses. We will make a donation each year that will help pay for Homer's needs, and hopefully, he'll be able to visit us at a Pony Club show or rally occasionally during the year. For more information about Homer, visit <http://www.worldhorsewelfare.org/you-help/adoption>

Quiz Night, Saturday 19th November

Another very successful fundraising evening which added £400 to club funds. Judith was our ever popular quizmeister and kept us on our toes with several rounds of brain-teasing questions. Thanks to Hilary for preparing the posters and tickets and finding some great raffle prizes, to all those who provided the warming chilli and spud supper and to everyone who came along to support the event.

Christmas Festival, Sunday 20th November

A fundraising opportunity that was simply too good to miss! Lou Turner arranged for Taunton Vale Pony Club to collect the donations made by visitors taking a sleigh ride with Santa during the Taunton Town Centre Christmas Festival. Many thanks to Louise Overhill, Anna and Megan Edwards, Lizzie and Isla Ginbey, Phoebe Mansfield and Claire Bainbridge for rattling the collection tins through the afternoon and raising the fantastic sum of £300.

CakeStall, Neroche Christmas Fayre, Sunday 4th December

Another chance to raise some funds selling the scrumptious festive cakes made by Pony Club Mums. We had so much competition that profits weren't great, but many thanks to Trudy for lots of organising and baking, to Ellie, Toots and Harriet for manning the stall and Sarah for the mulled wine.

Showjumping at Westpoint Christmas Fayre, Sunday 4th December



From hundreds of entries, Kate Shapland from Taunton Vale was one of the lucky riders selected to take part in the show jumping competition at the Westpoint Christmas Fayre – and what a challenge it turned out to be for Kate and Bicky who fought their way through 5 testing rounds to reach the final and take 5th place.

>> Here's a photo of Kate and Bicky, both looking extremely well turned out.

<< and one of them in action.

Fantastic achievement Kate – well done.



Christmas Party, Saturday 10th December

A great way to finish off the year – a disco party with sizzling sausages, party poppers, balloons and goodies. Hope you all enjoyed reading your Pony Club Annual.

This was also our opportunity to thank Rachel and Pippa Hoyle for all the support they have given our branch over the years. They will be missed, but we wish them the very best of luck for their stay in the United States.

Dengie Winter League Preliminary Competition Qualifiers 2012

We have two members who have qualified in the preliminary rounds to take part in the Dengie Area competitions in Spring 2012:

Toots Salisbury (Dressage)
Kate Shapland (Showjumping)

Well done to you both – we'll all be watching and wishing you well for the next round.

Don't forget – details of this competition and *oodles* more information is available on the Pony Club website at <http://www.pcuk.org>. It's a great resource that has recently been updated to make it easier to use.

Coming Up

Taunton Vale Foxhounds Children's Meet

The Taunton Vale Foxhounds Children's Meet will take place on Monday 2nd January at Swallows Barn Farm, West Hatch. This is a great opportunity to try hunting for the first time. If you're not sure of the do's and don'ts, take a look at the information on our website <http://branches.pcuk.org/tauntonvale/dress-code-and-standards/hunting-dress-code-and-etiquette/> At the end of this newsletter is a **Beginner's Guide to Hunting** which appeared in the Horse and Hound magazine - it's full of useful information and well worth a read.

Member's Story

In a bid to keep the format of our newsletter varied and interesting, it would be good to publish a story from a member, parent or someone associated with the Club. This might be along the lines of how you started riding, your first pony, your most successful moment, your most embarrassing moment, etc. If you'd like to volunteer your story for the next newsletter, please email it to Helen at jhtoon@btinternet.com.

What our members have been doing

Here are some great results:

- at the Race Horse ReHoming Centre Show in August, Sophie Turner won the Leadrein Jumping class at 1ft and came 4th in the Mountain and Moorland class

Lauryn Turner won Pony Club Pony class, came 3rd in Family Pony class, 4th in the Coloured class and also completed two clear rounds in the jumping.
- at Crewkerne Show Sophie was second in the lead rein jumping and won lots of rosettes in the gymkhana games. Lauryn came 1st with Oliver Dummett as her partner in the Horse and Hound Showjumping and then took second place in the Pony Club Pony class.
- at the West Somerset Pony Club Open Show, Lauryn came took fifth place in the 1ft 9 showjumping.
- At a recent competition at Heazle, Lauryn achieved a double clear, taking sixth place in the 1ft 9" showjumping class which qualified her to compete at Cricklands in 2012. Not content with that, Lauryn went on to take sixth place in the 2ft class – *what a fantastic time they've been having*☺
- At the Taunton Vale Harriers Mini ODE at Regency House, Ellie Clist took second place in the Expert Class 2ft 3in.

Fantastic results – well done.

Don't forget to send in all your news, results and photos – can't publish it if we don't know about it☺

Pony Club Annual 2012

The Annuals have arrived. If you haven't yet received yours, please contact Helen and arrange to collect it, or pick up at the next rally.

Rally Booking Procedure

Don't forget to get your reply slips in early, **at least one week ahead. This helps so much with planning groups and instructors. Late booking may incur a charge of 50% extra.**

- Complete the rally slip (you can send more than one at a time)
- Enclose a cheque for the cost of the rally. If you are paying for more than one rally with a single cheque, please write on the back of the cheque the dates you are paying for.
- Return slips to: Graham Harvey, Old Manor Barn, Beercombe, Taunton, TA3 6AJ

Medical Armbands/Sweatshirts/manual of Horsemanship

All available from Sarah Salisbury. Medical armbands are compulsory for cross country rallies and highly recommended at all other rallies. Please note that these must be worn on your arm – not on your leg.

Branded Branch Clothing

Judith Wakley has a list of branded clothing – polo shirts, showerproof jackets, etc. Contact Judith on (01823) 480343 if you'd like to purchase anything.

Secondhand Register

Buying or selling - if you have anything to add to the list, please email Louise on louiseoverhill@aol.com. The current list of items is available on our website. It also helps our fundraising effort, as 10% of the proceeds go to Pony Club.

Reminder of Contacts

If you have any **general queries**, complaints or issues, **Helen Toon** will be your first point of contact (07751062702) or (01460) 281315. If she is unable to take your call immediately, please be assured that your call will be returned at the earliest opportunity.

Dates for your Diary

Rather than list the dates of the many events that will be on during the coming weeks, here are links to some of the useful websites to visit. Also any schedules that I receive will be available on our website under the [Schedules](#) tab.

<http://www.equinetourism.co.uk/>

<http://www.tivpc.org.uk/calendar.htm>

http://www.ridingdiary.co.uk/newregions.asp?Region=SOUTH_WEST_&id=903

That's it for now – have a very happy and peaceful Christmas and we look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Best regards,

The Committee, Taunton Vale Branch of the Pony Club

Committee Members

Helen Toon	DC/ Membership Secretary	(01460) 281315 (07751062702)
Graham Harvey	Treasurer/Rally Replies	(01823) 480791
Sarah Salisbury	Merchandise/Child Protection/Health and Safety	(01823) 480256
Helen Toon	Secretary/Website/Newsletter	(01460) 281315 (07751062702)
Hannah Perry	Senior TSJ	(01823) 443536
Belinda Humphry	Various	(01823) 281597
David Lodge	Minute Secretary	
Louise Dummett	Mini/Jnr Team Showjumping	
Louisa Turner	Media	
Judith Wakley	Branded Clothing/Cakes Sales	
Hilary North	Various	
Trudy Clist	Triathlon/Tetrathlon/Junior Team Showjumping	

A beginner's guide to hunting



Catherine Austen, H&H hunting editor

8 September, 2011

Never been hunting, but would love to have a go? Daunted by the idea of going out for the first time? Follow our guide to get the most from your day.

How do I find out where to go?

To find your local hunt, visit www.mfha.org/hunts (foxhounds) or www.amhb.org.uk (harriers and beagles, click on "go hunting"). Then ring the hunt secretary. This applies for any day's hunting when you are not a subscriber to that particular pack. Ask him or her whether you can come out, where the meet is, where you should park and how much you have to pay. This is called the "cap". It will vary enormously between hunting countries depending on how old you are and whether you are planning to follow on a horse or on foot. Packs often do good deals for under-25s and people who farm in the hunting country.

Do I need a companion?

If you can persuade a hunting friend with a well-behaved horse to accompany you, great, particularly if your horse hasn't been out before. But it's not essential. Tell the hunt secretary this is your first time, or that you are fairly inexperienced on the hunting field. He/she may be able to suggest someone to look after you for the day, and at least will be aware and able to keep an eye on you.

Is my horse suitable?

The answer is that you don't really know until you get there, but there is no reason why any horse shouldn't learn to hunt well. Many horses get a little overexcited by being at such a terrific "party", but can you blame them? Autumn hunting is perfect for horses who haven't hunted, and for young, green animals because things happen at a more gentle pace. There is often more standing-around time for them to absorb what's going on.

If your horse is used to busy collecting rings and doesn't mind dogs around his feet, there's every chance he'll be fine. Use your brain and stay to the side of the main field so your horse has a chance to look at what's going on, rather than throwing him straight into the middle of the pack.

Do I need to plait?

Not during autumn hunting, which extends until the opening meet at the beginning of November. After that most people will, out of smartness and courtesy to those whose land they are crossing, but it's not compulsory. Manes should be neat, tidy and clean, but you shouldn't get sent home for not plaiting.

What should I wear?

During autumn hunting, a tweed jacket and shirt and tie or coloured stock, pale breeches, clean boots and gaiters/half-chaps or long boots, dark gloves and a hat with a dark cover. In the season proper, with most packs adults tend to wear black or navy coats, but you will see some in tweed too. If you don't own a tweed coat for autumn hunting, don't worry about it too much. Girls: hairnets, not flowing locks, please. Make-up is fine, but not Jordan-style, and take off jewellery unless you want to risk tearing your earlobes off on low branches. You may wear a body protector, but preferably under your jacket rather than over it.

What should my horse wear?

If you aren't sure about your brakes, err on the side of caution or take a stronger bit/martingale in the lorry with you. Numnahs should be dark and follow the shape of the saddle — save that white dressage square for another day.

If you know he might kick, put a red ribbon on his tail and stay well out of the way whenever possible. Kicking a horse or a rider is bad enough, but kicking a hound is the worst thing you can do. You will get sent home, so make sure your horse's head is turned towards hounds, not his backside. A green ribbon denotes a young horse, and if someone puts the back of their hand in the hollow of their back, it means "don't get too close".

Should he wear boots?

This is up to you. If you live in wall country, knee boots are de rigueur. Otherwise it's your choice, and you know what suits your horse. But remember the boots will be on for a lot longer during the course of a hunting day than they would be during a cross-country round, and the risks of rubbing and overheating are greater. You'll find plenty do and plenty don't.

Will I have to jump huge hedges?

Of course not. Even if your hunt has a reputation for being a serious jumping pack, you can always go round — and there will be other people taking the roundabout route, too. Only jump what you feel happy with; it's not a competition.

How fit does my horse need to be?

Very rarely does hunting involve galloping flat-out for very long, and autumn hunting in particular can involve a lot of standing around. Your horse needs to be fit enough to canter up a hill without collapsing, but really doesn't need to be racehorse-fit. And you can go home whenever you like — don't feel compelled to stay out for hours if you and your horse are knackered.

Golden rules for first-timers

- Find out who the master is and say good morning
- Never overtake the field master, and always listen carefully to his instructions
- Always thank traffic that slows down or stops
- Never block the road
- Don't park in gateways or driveways unless specifically told you can
- If you hear the shout "huntsman please!" or "whip please!" get out of the way sharpish so they can get through
- Always call them hounds, not dogs
- Always shut gates if you are the last through unless told otherwise, and if the person in front of you shouts "gate, please!" pass it back to the next person
- Do turn your mobile phone off, and talk quietly while standing at the side of a covert — the huntsman will not be pleased to hear you shrieking about what you got up to the night before
- Never ride across the middle of a field of sown corn, even if you see hunt staff doing so
- Do ask questions about what is going on. The more you understand about a day's hunting, the more you will enjoy it. People will be very happy to answer your queries
- Do find the field master/master/secretary before you go home and say thank you and good night, which is the traditional way to say goodbye — even at 9am