Helen Jones attended Welsh Team Trials in March and was selected to ride as part of the Pony Club Welsh Mounted Games Team for the Royal Windsor Horse Show held in May. On Monday we arrived at Tally Ho Farm where we had a 2-day training camp with our Welsh Team Trainer Elaine Trevor Jones (Berwyn and Dee Pony Club). The team used a local polo arena to practice and were also joined by the Staffs College and Sandhurst Pony Club Mounted Games Teams. Whilst at Tally Ho Farm the owner Chris put on a BBQ for us all and the Welsh team also had chance to practice their entertainment in front of an audience.

On Wednesday we travelled in convoy to Windsor and headed into the showground for our allotted arrival time of midday. Once we arrived it was a frantic rush to set up camp, sort the stables out and set up the display in the Pony Club marquee on the showground. The parents split into teams to tackle each job. We put up a marquee and set up our kitchen ready to feed the team and families for the week. The stables had to be decorated and carefully prepared for each pony in our bid to win the Pony Club Stable Cup.

On Wednesday afternoon the team tacked up and did an arena familiarisation and practice in the Castle Arena. During the evening the team had to perform their entertainment in the Pony Club marquee and were presented with their red riding sweatshirts.

On Thursday morning there was a practice, then a chance to look around the show and some shopping before tacking up in the afternoon for the first day of competition. The atmosphere in the Castle Arena was fantastic and the parents and supporters all sat together with National flags and kit to cheer on their teams. Wales had an amazing first session and came out winners with first place rosettes.

On Friday morning there was another practice and more tack cleaning and stable tidying ahead of an inspection by the Kings Troop. Each day the team had lunch in the Pony Club marquee and met various equestrian celebrities and made visits to different stands around the show. On Friday evening we had the second competition session and again did really well. Unfortunately, during the big sack race one of our team had a problem with their foot/boot and they were unable to tuck it inside the sack, so despite coming second in the race we were eliminated. This allowed England to take the advantage and win the session with us in second place, but overall, we were still ahead on points. After putting the ponies away, we all went into Windsor to do some sightseeing.

On Saturday there was another morning practice and then time to see some other events and displays at the show including International Carriage Driving, Grand Prix Show Jumping, Dressage, the Royal Horse Artillery and Polo. The team also visited the Kings Troop in their camp and saw their horses, tack, guns and equipment and had the opportunity to find out about life in the army. The third competition session on Saturday afternoon was watched by HRH King Charles and the teams all lined up to salute him as he arrived midway through the session. The interruption in the middle of the session meant that the number of races was cut from 7 to 5 and England and Ireland were joint winners on Saturday with Wales taking third place, but still ahead overall on points.

Sunday was the final day of the competition and following the morning games practice the teams undertook a different kind of challenge on the Land Rover Defender stand where they drove the miniature vehicles around an obstacle course. One team member then had to complete a time trial which Wales won! Then they headed off to the Pony Club marquee where the Pony Club committee announced the winners of the Stable Cup (Scotland) and as Wales had won the entertainment element they had to perform again! Pony Club committee members Richard and Mary Marsden were given awards for their contributions to Pony Club over 40 plus years. The build up to the final session was very exciting as Wales were ahead on the points table, but in the final session each race has double points awarded, and as the scores at the top were so close anyone could have won. Unfortunately again for the Pony Club teams the number of races was cut again from 7 to 5 games as the earlier events had overrun. This was disappointing but at least we did not have to do Big Sack again! Wales rode brilliantly in the final session but due to an awkward balloon not wanting to pop in the balloon race we came fourth in that race which England won. Then in the final race, which was Five Flag, Helen was the last rider out and despite her fabulous effort and Wales winning the race, England came second which then gave England the points to take the victory overall for the competition.

Helen and Chester had an amazing week in Windsor meeting loads of people, experiencing lots of different things, and riding in a really thrilling competition arena. Helen is really grateful for all of the support from the Flint and Denbigh Pony Club and the training, coaching and friendship she has had over the years that helped her to get to Windsor in 2025 to represent Wales.