

PROFILE ON PAST PETERSFIELD PONY CLUB MEMBER

. LAURA GORDON

I have been asked to write this piece for the newsletter in what has proven to be my busiest week horse wise of the year so far. With preparing one horse for the British Dressage Regional Championships, and another for the eventing season, plus working, it has proven a challenge to get this together!

19 years after I first joined Petersfield Pony Club, and 5 years after I have left; I still feel this was such a huge positive influence on my life and where I am with my horses today.

I joined the Club in 1997 on a 14.2hh 5 year old chestnut pony (Condie Nelson). My legs didn't even come to the end of the saddle flap, and he had just as much experience as myself – none! Mum said that she wasn't going to buy numerous ponies and I would be able to 'grow into him'. I still have Nelson at the grand age of 25, and he still competes in dressage/evening competition to this day with me, and a girl at the yard who keeps him ticking over. Boy did he teach me to ride! He was the least handiest pony (coming last at Camp in that particular event!); would chuck me off numerous times and refuse a jump from a mile out. He even managed to dump me at the last fence showjumping at the Petersfield Pony Club's Cross Country and Showjumping event in front of Penny Briggs 2 years ago about 10 years after I last fell off him – very embarrassing and a little sore. Despite all this we had so much fun at numerous Camps from Junior Camp at Chase Farm to Senior Camp at Blandford Forum in Dorset to Tweseldown and Arbor Trees Farm, West Meon.



We were lucky enough to take part in all team competitions having great success and actually competed BE winning an Intro in 2005 at Mattingley. Nelson was also lucky enough to go to the PC National Dressage Championships in 2007 with his loaner at the time (Sophie Hopkins) whilst I took my second steed Ransom (Bantry Parks Ransom).

He was another young purchase at 3½ years (16.0hh) to take over from where Nelson's unpredictable antics failed him! Ransom and I again competed successfully in teams and represented Petersfield PC at Dengie Open Dressage National Championships on two occasions. We had a great time British Eventing up to Novice Level until I went off to Uni to become a veterinary nurse and we soon became out of practice. I persevered until we had a horrendous rotational fall resulting in me breaking my pelvis. Although this was awful at the time it led to our calling in life which was pure dressage. I have to initially thank Sandra Dzenis for her time and training until I moved to West Sussex where Ransom and I have now moved up to British Dressage Advanced Medium competing at both regional and national levels thank to our trainer Robbie Carpenter. We also enjoy our freestyle to music, which I would recommend anybody to try. It is such fun putting a routine and music together.



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Many years later I have decided I missed eventing and 2½ years ago bought a third (and final!!) horse who has given me the confidence to jump again and we are preparing for our first season of BE at 100. Finley (Carramore Boy) is a 17.0hh ex racer from Ireland who is quite quirky, but has turned into a lovely event horse who I have high hopes for.

Pony Club life definitely showed me how much I love horses and competing in multi disciplines, but also taught me the management and care of my lovely boys, which has developed over the years thanks to the monthly stable management sessions endured at Priory Farm (owed by the Roger Smiths) and the Pony Club Tests. Being a member of such a close Club like Petersfield means that you make friends for life. You may not see them all the time, and life certainly flies by but thanks to the power of Facebook, you are able to follow their successes, support them during the lows, ask advice when needed and have a good old fashioned chat when you eventually see each other again!

I am so glad my mum signed me up to Petersfield Pony Club all those many years ago and am pleased that I have managed to give back to the Pony Club with both judging and teaching over the years.

Thank you for the best years and memories and hope all your current and future pony clubbers have as many as me!

