

Entries for Widmerpool close on 16th July

Look in the newsletter for some exciting news about this event!!

July 2011 Newsletter



Lincomb Farm

This new venue on our calendar gave drivers an opportunity to drive on Dave Smith's patch of the midlands. Whilst we couldn't make it we have heard people enjoyed the event, although please David, sunshine for Sunday next year!

The course proved challenging for many drivers, with the cones catching a couple of people out too.

Results

Newcomer/ small pony

1st Becky Jones

Pre Novice

1st Cath Jacobs

2nd Megan Wheeldon

Int Single

1st Rosemary Wall

Open Pony

1st Dawn Tebbett

Tandem

1st Claudia Bunn

2nd Elisabeth Greensmith

3rd Julie Tomasik

Open Horse

1st Paul Hart

2nd Caroline Weiss

3rd Tony Gregory

Reminder: it is not the secretary's nor the organiser's responsibility to find you a groom for the competition. Please, if you do need a groom at the competition please arrange this before the event and don't just arrive and expect a person to jump on board!

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www.mdtg.co.uk – see all results, king of the cones and point league table on our website

Widmerpool – 30th & 31st July – closing date 16th July – Angela and team have once again many exciting things lined up for us to enjoy,

- Pimms Reception on Friday evening
- Evening meal on Saturday provided by Kate & Dave
- Equine bring and buy Sale (Label your items with description, name and cost and sale will be overseen by Jane) on Sat evening – **no equines and open for competitors, grooms and stewards only to 'bring & buy'**
- The wine for Saturday evening has been generously sponsored by an unknown benefactor!
- The water obstacle has been sponsored by **Tagg Equestrian**. The fastest Novice Horse and Pony will win a leather head collar.
- 7 obstacles – 1 water
- All on grass apart from approx 1km on a track
- Cones may include a bridge
- Newcomers approx 6km 4/5 obstacles

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My first MDTG event

My name is Megan Wheeldon and I am 10 years old. I drive an Exmoor X called Skippy. My first outdoor event was on the 21st & 22nd May 2011 at Tutbury.

The week running up to the event was the hardest part because my Dad was also competing in the pony pairs class, so we had three ponies to bath, three sets harness to clean and two carriages to wash. We tried to remember everything, but failed miserably, as we left both sets of carriage lamps at home!

On arrival Paul, Ann and Nat gave me a yellow t-shirt with 'Megan and Skippy' on the front and 'Tutbury Driving Trials 2011' on the back. It is great!

I competed in the Pre-Novice class, so had to do a standing presentation. On Saturday, we had to get up early to get everything ready – the judge checked that everything was clean and fitted well and gave me some good tips on how to improve for next time.

Then it was time for dressage. I remembered my dressage test, but there were elements that could have been better – this is something I need to work on. Me and Skippy love cones! I finished with two balls down and 9 seconds under the time (which was better than my Dad).

On Sunday, I was the first turnout to go on the marathon and hoped I could remember the course, as I had driven it on a Pleasure Drive last year. Section A went well and I finished dead on the minimum time. Section D was a disaster! Skippy is not the best walker in the world and always finds it hard to make the time. I must have said 'walk on' a thousand times! Mum (who is my backstepper) had to help because I lost my voice. Now for the best bit – Section E. There were six obstacles and I thought the best ones were number 3 with a bridge in the middle and number 5, the water. Skippy looked after us, but got a bit tired towards the end. After all, he is 20!

I loved every minute of the weekend. Thank you to Richard, Dorothy, Paul, Ann, Nat and everyone who helped to run this fantastic event.

By Megan

Offchurch

Well, I was at this one!! We arrived on Wednesday morning to start building the arena and mark out the course and build obstacles. We had promised to lend our horse for Jack to drive so this year had an equine to look after as well as prepare the venue. Rhea was happy to have a few days off school to help – she embraced this opportunity and designed the cones course! We had pre competition help from Mick Peace, Keith Harding, David Smith & Roger Godfrey and Bob's sister and family, Louise, Alan and Ian. Jack arrived Thursday evening with his suit, sleeping bag a party pack of cider! This help was invaluable – to know someone will deliver the club caravan or trailer for you so you don't have to go and collect is such a relief! Mick has helped us set up dressage arena and build cones courses for a few years now and he comes prepared with his banana sandwich lovingly prepared by Jilly. Keith helped build obstacles [just goes to show that even helping prepare doesn't stop you going wrong on the marathon course!]. People started arriving on Friday and it's lovely to see people pull up and start to pitch their camp - selecting a place near to the water or under trees or near a fence to create a corral for their pony.

We had fantastic weather for the whole event and it makes everyone feel good and enjoy the atmosphere so much more with the warmth of the sun on us. The cones course contained a box this year and it drove nicely for all – the course was flowing and gave the scorers an easier challenge as there were only 6 double clears of the day to work out the 'King of the Cones', kindly sponsored by Northern Plan – congratulations to Julie Wedgbury for a quick & slick round.



David Wheeldon



Rosemary Wall

Full results are available of MDTG website, including Points league results and obstacle times.

Sunday saw the newcomers / small pony class start the day and at 1030 the marathon started in the beautiful Warwickshire countryside on the Offchurch Estate. For the Sunday drivers, Linda Wiggin drove a winning dressage test with her cob with Andrea Jackson and Carl Warrilow 2nd and 3rd respectively - a change of fortune during the marathon phase where Carl took the lead and won overall.

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The pre novice class also saw changes between the two days, with Marian Lovelace winning dressage but losing out to Lorna Ingram who won overall on Sunday. Cath Jacobs and Megan Wheeldon were battling it out for 2nd and 3rd place over the two days, with Cath finally getting the blue rosette. Novice singles had a tight contest for dressage, with less than 5 points between the four competitors! Mick Ward nudged ahead in this phase and with no double clears in the cones phase remained the overnight leader. Sunday saw a change around with Jack Brooks taking the lead in marathon, going on to win overall. Mick and Pam Brown were equal 2nd on the marathon but with Mick's overnight lead took 2nd place overall. Unfortunately Lucy Barclay missed a compulsory flag and had the big E. The two competitors in the intermediate class were swapping between 1st and 2nd place across the phases, with Valerie Maunder taking the red rosette on Sunday afternoon and Ginny White 2nd. Single Pony class saw five competitors, with the welcome return of Kerry Copas who's returned to driving after a break from the scene. Dawn Tebbett and Sarah Jane Cook were close throughout the competition, with Dawn keeping just ahead of Sarah in each phase and they finished 1st and 2nd respectively. Kerry was pleased with her 3rd place and Pam Moore 4th, with Elisabeth Greensmith finishing in 5th after dressage. All changed after marathon for these three competitors, with flying round the marathon and finishing 3rd, Pam Moore 4th and Kerry easing herself back in and completing on 5th. Single Horse had a strong class of eight competitors and Maxine Ingham took the lead on Saturday, with Mike Howard 2nd, Angela Flanagan 3rd and Geoff Kirby 4th. The marathon was a tight contest with only four penalties between the first four places! Paul Hart pulled off a great drive, hotly chased by Lynne Longbottom [lucky Paul]. Tracey Robson, returning to competing after having her beautiful daughter earlier this year, was hot on their hoofs and Geoff pushing hard too. The overall results all changed with the low scoring dressage marks helping pull up the overall scores; Mike 1st, Maxine 2nd, Geoff 3rd, Lynne 4th, Paul 5th and Tracey 6th. Pairs had three competitive drivers and saw the welcome return of Chris Doughty driving following his accident last year., who opted to go h/c for Saturday [we know you love dressage Chris] to ease himself and the horses back into competitions. Mick Peace's horses were keen on Saturday and performed well to give him a lead in dressage, although the judge did have his hand to the keys just in case! Keith drove his horses well to give him 2nd place [n.b. horse for sale] and David Wheeldon settled for 3rd place. Marathon saw David pull the hat out of the bag and take the red rosette with Mick 2nd, Chris 3rd and Keith 4th. Overall saw David 1st, Mick 2nd and Keith 3rd. It was great to have a strong class of pony teams and tandem. Julia Liles took the lead, with Julie Wedgbury 2nd, Ursula Hirschberg 3rd, James Binns 4th and Anne Chambers 5th. Ursula had a new pony in the lead so took it easy with him and James had a whole new team at their first competition! Julie drove a fast marathon to win, with Julia 2nd, Anne 3rd and James 4th. The places remained unchanged for the overall results. The novice qualifier only had two competitors show, one horse and one pony, Unfortunately Rosemary [nice new awning] didn't have a great dressage so was not eligible to qualify but Teresa Macleod drove a nice test, and despite taking a meandering route in the walk and incurring penalties, did qualify and we look forward to seeing her at Windsor in a couple of months.



Julie Wedgbury, photo by Geoff Kay

A Bridge too Far [or behind the scenes at Poplars Farm]

There is a certain individual on the carriage driving circuit who spends a little bit of time at Hepworth Pipes, very little time fixing bathrooms and other domestic chores at home but a lot of time in a workshop at the said Poplars farm. Now this workshop is shared between myself, Richard, who claims to be the joint proprietor of the establishment and aforementioned Paul. Now when I say shared I mean I have a small corner under the bucket catching drips from the leaking roof. Paul has the rest. My part has all the essentials for agricultural maintenance: a few bent rusty nails, assorted lengths but never the lengths you need, staples in similar condition to the nails, string for when the nails and staples won't fix it and the requisite hammer. Paul's part of the workshop houses a quad bike, a carriage, compressor, welder and a host of tools, paint, lock up cabinet, drills etc. As well as all of that there is, in a permanent state of readiness, two fishing rods with which we have been known to sneak off when we thought we could get away with it. On the catering side there is a fridge, complete with bread and a tub of butter, plus maggots in various stages of their life, or death cycle for use when fishing calls, a toaster, a microwave and a kettle. Who could ask for more? There is also an air rifle, a mouse trap and a very live mouse!

The snow lay about two feet thick on the drive, everywhere was covered in a thick layer of ice, all of the taps were frozen, the horses that were in had to stay in because it was too slippery to take them out and those that were out had to stay out for the same reason. It was 10 degrees below and Christmas was rapidly approaching. Roll on spring. Now hypothermia can effect individuals in different ways and perfectly normal people have been known to come up with the strangest of ideas, such as 'Richard I'm going to build a bridge!' 'Yes Paul [as in Paul Daniels] and for your next trick?' a few days passed and the weather got colder. 'Richard I've been thinking about this bridge'. 'You can't be serious' [as John McEnroe would say]. I could see the look in his eye and the scraps of paper that started to appear with designs and sketches that yes, Paul was serious! Now the only question what remained was it for the M1, M6, M42 or just a fresh crossing over the Trent in the middle of Burton in order to relieve the congestion when Paul was on his way back from Hepworths?

It soon became apparent that this undertaking was for next years' event and if it was going to be ready on time it had to be started now. Space was allocated for the construction, timber ordered; everything was in place to start, except...'Richard have you got any big timber to support it?' 'Yes Paul, just look around the yard'. 'Not big enough, fine for young professional driver Megan, but if Chris hits it with her team it will be matchwood'.

Spring was on its way 'I've seen what I want Richard – those purlins in that building' – down came the building, the project saved.

Footnote: we have several steel girders stacked in one field: there's no truth in the rumours that next year it will be a tower. After all horses and carriages don't go up towers, or so the mouse tells me!

Richard Ward

Would you like to write an article / advert / report to be published in the newsletter? Please feel free to help me out and contribute to the newsletter!

Ruth Auton / 0116 2753428 / ruth@auton4321.freeseve.co.uk